

# **PRABUDDHA BHARATA**

**or AWAKENED INDIA**

**A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896**



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# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *Beginning Meditation*

When night passes into day, and day into night, a state of relative calmness ensues. The early morning and the early evening are the two periods of calmness. Your body will have a like tendency to become calm at those times. We should take advantage of that natural condition and begin then to practise. Make it a rule not to eat until you have practised; if you do this, the sheer force of hunger will break your laziness. Those of you who can afford it will do better to have a room for this practice alone. Do not sleep in that room, it must be kept holy. You must not enter the room until you have bathed, and are perfectly clean in body and mind. Place flowers in that room always; they are the best surroundings for a Yogi; also pictures that are pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling, nor anger, nor unholy thought in that room. Only allow those persons to enter it who are of the same thought as you. Then gradually there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, so that when you are miserable, sorrowful, doubtful, or your mind is disturbed, the very fact of entering that room will make you calm. The idea is that by keeping holy vibrations there the place becomes and remains illumined. Those who cannot afford to have a room set apart can practise anywhere they like. Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to send



a current of holy thought to all creation. Mentally repeat, 'Let all beings be happy; let all beings be peaceful; let all beings be blissful.' So do the east, south, north, and west. The more you do that the better you will feel yourself. You will find at last the easiest way to make ourselves healthy is to see that others are healthy, and the easiest way to make ourselves happy is to see that others are happy. After doing that, those who believe in God should pray—not for money, not for health, nor for heaven; pray for knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish. Then the next thing to do is to think of your own body, and see that it is strong and healthy; it is the best instrument you have. Think of it as being as strong as adamant, and that with the help of this body you will cross the ocean of life. Freedom is never to be reached by the weak. Throw away all weakness. Tell your body that it is strong, tell your mind that it is strong, and have unbounded faith and hope in yourself.

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# TRADITIONAL WISDOM

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!*

## *Divine Transformation*

July 2014  
Vol. 119, No. 7

इदं वै तन्मधु दध्यङ्गाथर्वणोऽश्विभ्यामुवाच । तदेतदृषिः पश्यन्नवोचत् ।  
रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव तदस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय । इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते  
युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ॥ इति । अयं वै हरयः अयं वै दश च सहस्राणि  
बहूनि चानन्तानि च तदेतद्ब्रह्म्यापूर्वमनपरमनन्तरमवाह्यम् अयमात्मा ब्रह्म  
सर्वानुभूः इत्यनुशासनम् ॥

This is that meditation on things mutually helpful, which Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva Veda, taught the Ashvins (twin gods). Perceiving this the rishi said: '(God) transformed himself in accordance with each form; that form of his was for the sake of making him known. On account of maya God is perceived as manifold, for to him are yoked ten organs, nay, hundreds of them. He is the organs; he is ten and thousands—many and infinite. That Brahman is without prior and posterior, without interior or exterior. This Atman, the perceiver of everything, is Brahman. This is the teaching.'

*(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 2.5.19)*

एकैकं जालं बहुधा विकुर्वन्नस्मिन् क्षेत्रे संहरत्येष देवः ।  
भूयः सृष्टा पतयस्तथेशः सर्वाधिपत्यं कुरुते महात्मा ॥

Making each net (creation) diverse on this field (of maya), God withdraws it. And that God, the great Self, after creating the rulers again as before, presides over them all.

*(Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 5.3)*

न ह्यङ्गमङ्गिनो भिन्नं नैवाङ्गी चाङ्गतस्तथा ।  
तत्सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मैवेदमिह स्फुटम् ॥

A limb is not different from the body, nor is the body different from the limb. Likewise, all this is, verily, Brahman, and Brahman is, verily, all this.

*(Sri Ramakrishna Gita, 1.20)*

# THIS MONTH

**Sri Ramakrishna's Grand Unification** is the divine process of unifying the world, which is at present reeling under all kinds of divisiveness and fragmentation.



**Sri Ramakrishna: Confluence of Jnana and Bhakti**, by Dr I S Madugula, a retired English teacher and author from Austin, Texas, explains how the Master harmonizes in his life and teachings the two most followed paths towards the Supreme.

Asim Chaudhuri of Phoenix, Arizona, a researcher and well-known author, presents in **Swami Vivekananda in Chicago: New Findings** his discovery of Swamiji's familiar picture published for the first time as a line drawing in the *Chicago Tribune* of 1893.

**Sri Ramakrishna: Transforming Lives**, by Sibatosh Bagchi, is a sketch of some characters who were changed after coming in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. The author is a former principal of the Greater Kolkata College of Engineering and Management, Kolkata.



Environmentalism is a seriously discussed issue today. Ms Rajani Rao U, Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Philosophy, Manasagangotri, Mysore, presents **Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Nature**.

Swamiji's spiritual stature was not always properly understood by all of his disciples. Sudesh Garg, a devotee from Ambala, Punjab, writes about some of **Those Who Defected from Swami Vivekananda**.

In **Swami Vivekananda's '3Hs' Formula** Dr Alpana Ghose, former head of the Department of Chemistry, Ranchi Women's College, narrates a heart-warming incident of how Swamiji's ideas completely changed a girl's life.



There is a growing need for the right type of education. Rajeshri Trivedi, Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, highlights some aspects of a **Comprehensive Education in the Light of Swami Vivekananda**.

Sri Ramakrishna worshipped the Divine Mother in his consort Sri Sarada Devi. Brahmachari Chandikachaitanya, of Ramakrishna Math, Lucknow, brings out the **Significance of Shodashi Puja** and its meaning for today's world.

In the twentieth part of **Eternal Words** Swami Adbhutananda teaches us about some aspects of dharma and the great importance of living according to it. The swami's words are translated from *Sat Katha*, published from Udbodhan Office, Kolkata.

## EDITORIAL

# *Sri Ramakrishna's Grand Unification*

WITH THE RISE OF the anatomically modern humans 200,000 years ago the world gradually started changing. And for the last 10,000 years we have been modifying plants and animals to suit our human purposes. Through grafting, implanting, transplanting, cross-pollinating, crossbreeding, selective breeding, and other techniques we have speeded up processes that would normally take aeons for nature to fulfil. Structurally, the human brain has not changed much, though the mind has. The human mind has evolved from a primitive social life to exploring the universe to contemplating its own origins. There are many factors that aided this expansion of consciousness, but if we look at the basics, we find that it is due to two powerful forces that have formed a loop, as it were, with consciousness: knowledge and love. As consciousness expands, so do knowledge and love; and as knowledge and love expand, so does consciousness. Humankind is thus redesigning itself and the world through consciousness.

The last few centuries have witnessed an accelerated expansion of consciousness. Many old institutions such as religion, democracy, social structures, culture, and so on have not correspondingly expanded in this mental space; that is why there is so much resistance to it. But today's human consciousness is irrepressibly overriding stubborn obstacles. The powers of knowledge and love unify, giving room to the ideas of the oneness and the interconnectedness of all life to become current and central themes in many sciences. Physicists are at present trying to unify all

the known forces into a Grand Unified Theory, and they may succeed one day because this is the age of unification. On the individual level, just as some old institutions and ideas display resistance, most of us also have not been able to fully assimilate into our consciousness the expanded ideas of unselfishness, altruism, empathy, compassion, and concern. We still hold on to divisive ideas of education, wealth, race, culture, language, and so forth. Humankind needs to urgently educate and culture itself in order to build a new type of civilization.

Sri Ramakrishna's advent in 1836 is a watershed in the evolution of the modern mind. He was the epitome of the highest knowledge and love that consciousness can ever hold. Through such a mind, embodying the two powers of knowledge and love, he accommodated all religions, sects, paths, practices, and cultures. Where there was divisiveness he showed their unity, even among the three philosophies of Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita, with their centuries-old disputations. His experiences were not confined to the field of religion alone, but spilled over into all aspects of our fragmented human life. Thus he was the first harmonizer and unifier of such apparently disparate things as science and religion, religion and society, individual and collective life. In the field of metaphysics he showed the unification of the absolute and the relative Reality, the personal and the impersonal God, Shiva and Shakti.

Sri Ramakrishna teaches that there are two types of minds: those with the characteristics of Shiva and those with the characteristics of

Vishnu. He says: 'Jnana is the characteristic of Shiva, and bhakti of Vishnu. One who partakes of Shiva's nature becomes a jnani, and one who partakes of Vishnu's nature becomes a bhakta.' Sri Ramakrishna himself was the embodiment of Shiva and Vishnu. His mother Chandramani Devi, while once standing and chatting in front of a Shiva temple behind their house, saw divine light emanating from the Shiva linga and filling the small temple. That light flowed out in waves and engulfed her. She fell down unconscious, and when revived, she felt herself pregnant with that light. While on a pilgrimage to Gaya, Sri Ramakrishna's father had a wonderful vision of Vishnu seated on a throne and beckoning him thus: 'Kshudiram, I am very pleased with your sincere devotion. I shall incarnate Myself as your son and accept the loving service you offer Me in your cottage.' Thus Shiva and Vishnu, whom people consider as different, are in essence one, as was proved in Sri Ramakrishna's incarnation. And so was divine knowledge and love.

Sri Ramakrishna was also the embodiment of Purusha and Prakriti. Mathur Babu once saw the Master in a high state of consciousness pacing up and down near his room at Dakshineswar and appearing alternately as Shiva and Kali. Mathur ran up to him and falling prostrate declared: 'Father, I was watching you just now as you walked back and forth. I saw it distinctly: As you walked towards me, you were no longer yourself. You were the Divine Mother Kali from the temple! Then, as you turned around and walked in the opposite direction, you became Lord Shiva! At first I thought it was some kind of optical illusion. I rubbed my eyes and looked again, but I saw the same thing. As often as I looked I saw it!' This is just one instance in Sri Ramakrishna's life, but when we study his unique life, we find the merging in him of many gods, goddesses, and past avatars during his ecstatic states. He embodied them all, like

he did with Shiva and Vishnu. Sincere sadhakas and followers of different religions found their object of adoration, their Chosen Ideal, dwelling and reflecting in him. Sri Ramakrishna criticized no one, no path, no religious or worldly attitude, but accommodated everyone and everything in his vast consciousness.

As consciousness expands, humankind grows in knowledge, love, and power. This evolution of consciousness is hastening human growth and is also leading us to higher dimensions of existence. In knowledge and love lies embedded the essence of perfection, truth, and infinity. This is intuitively felt by everyone, and this is the goal that humankind is striving for. There is no separate ideal of perfection of knowledge and love but only one. To know is to love, and to love is to know. Thus in the ultimate unification, knowledge and love are one.

In every age an avatara comes not just to show the way to perfection and clear obstacles from its path but also to become the ideal representation of perfection. This perfection is not physical but mental—consciousness expanding to its pristine nature. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Conscious efforts lead to superconscious illumination. Infinite perfection is in every man though unmanifested.' In this age Sri Ramakrishna is that ideal of perfection. Swamiji also points out that 'Ramakrishna has no peer; nowhere else in this world exists that unprecedented perfection, that wonderful kindness for all that does not stop to justify itself, that intense sympathy for man in bondage.' In Sri Ramakrishna also, astoundingly, is humankind embodied, for as Swamiji showed, he lived the life of the whole human race from the earliest times and traversed all the stages that future humanity would take to reach perfection. Sri Ramakrishna is thus the perfect Consciousness of the mind that unifies humanity and divinity, absolute and relative, collective and individual.



# **Sri Ramakrishna: Confluence of Jnana and Bhakti**

**Dr IS Madugula**

FROM TIME TO TIME great illumined ones, who have the power to reveal the supernal vision to us, come to this earth. Though they are ever free, they want to help others become free. Sri Ramakrishna was one of those illumined ones who, in spite of being easily approachable by many, was beyond the grasp of common people. This essay refers to the epoch-making sage Sri Ramakrishna, who reaffirmed the Truth spoken of in the scriptures. The context is the bhakti tradition of Bengal during the nineteenth century. A significant fact that is sometimes overlooked by people who write or speak about Sri Ramakrishna is that he was enlightened well before he met his various gurus. The many gurus merely stoked the spiritual fire that had already been lit in him. He identified with none other than the various gods and goddesses he worshipped and realized that all were entwined in a single thread. How else could he reach the unshakable conclusion that all spiritual paths led to the same goal? Let us not forget that several gurus *came to him* and taught him, and in the process they got instructed by him. He had already experienced high states of consciousness even as a child.

## **The Confluence**

Although Sri Ramakrishna was involved in different types of sadhana, and although his religious background was primarily bhakti, his central message was Advaita, the non-dual Reality called Brahman. It was this teaching of Advaita that he passed on to the young Narendranath—Swami

Vivekananda's pre-monastic name—the first sceptic to question the methods and motives of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna's utter guilelessness charmed the educated college student so much that Narendranath threw himself at the Master's feet in total surrender. Through Sri Ramakrishna's powerful touch Narendranath experienced the state of samadhi and was thus convinced of being in contact with a truly enlightened teacher. A new age of enlightenment began when the Master admonished the acolyte to share his insights of Advaita with the world in order to raise its spiritual consciousness. He was meant to do God's work and not selfishly enjoy God's grace all by himself in samadhi.

Throughout his conversations, Sri Ramakrishna was seen as a highly realized Advaitin who simultaneously played the role of a bhakta. Witness, for example, his explanation of how both jnana and bhakti contribute to one's *ananda*: ‘The joy of worship one enjoys while chanting the name and glories of God. And the Joy of Brahman is the joy of God-vision. ... The jnani experiences jada samadhi, in which no trace of the “I” is left. The samadhi attained through the path of bhakti is called “chetana samadhi”. In this samadhi there remains the consciousness of “I”—the “I” of the servant-and-Master relationship, of the lover-and-Beloved relationship, the enjoyer-and-Food relationship.’<sup>1</sup>

Ramana Maharshi, a modern Self-realized saint of India, was about seven years old when Sri Ramakrishna left his mortal body. He spoke



SCULPTURE: 'BUDDHA HAND AND LOTUS TEALIGHT HOLDER' - RESIN WITH BRONZE FINISH / BUDDHAGROOVE.COM

of Sri Ramakrishna with great regard—it takes a saint to recognize another saint. The compilation *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*<sup>2</sup> has multiple references to Sri Ramakrishna. Referring to Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna weeping before the deity during their sadhana, the Maharsi explains: 'There was a powerful force (*sakti*) drawing them on through those experiences. Trust in that huge power to take you on to your goal. ... These manifestations are only passing signs of the great current carrying them on' (40-1). As for the great reservoir of power and grace that Sri Ramakrishna was, the Maharsi says: 'Just like iron filings drawn towards a magnet, the force is inside and not outside. Ramakrishna was in Vivekananda. If you think Vivekananda to be a body, Ramakrishna also is a body. But they are not bodies. Vivekananda could not go into Samadhi had not Ramakrishna been within him' (145). If Sri Ramakrishna felt that the Kali image had come alive, 'the vital force was due to himself. It was his own vital force which manifested as if it were outside and drew him in.

Were the image full of life it must have been found so by all' (563). These and other references indicate the high esteem in which Ramana Maharshi held Sri Ramakrishna. He did not find anything unusual or strange about him, his talk or his actions. Appearances, especially those of realized persons, are indeed deceiving.

Sri Ramakrishna started out as a bhakta and did not rest until he realized the Advaitic oneness of all creation, which has Brahman as its substratum. Acharya Shankara succinctly defined Advaita as: 'Brahman—the absolute existence, knowledge and bliss—is real. The universe is not real. Brahman and Ātman are one.'<sup>3</sup>

Now let us check some of the instructions Sri Ramakrishna gives to his disciples, who were anxious to follow the path to enlightenment. Explaining his approach to the Reality, Sri Ramakrishna says:

The Primordial Power is ever at play. She is creating, preserving, and destroying in play, as it were. This power is called Kali. Kali is verily Brahman, and Brahman is verily Kali. It is one and the same Reality. When we think of It as inactive, that is to say, not engaged in the act of creation, preservation, and destruction, then we call It Brahman. But when It engages in these activities, then we call It Kali or Shakti. The Reality is one and the same; the difference is in name and form.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Sri Ramakrishna attained supreme Consciousness, Brahman, the very first time he had the vision of Kali. Still he retained the ego of a bhakta, a separate self not quite merged with the universal Self. He calls this state of his ‘the ego of Knowledge’. The ‘Glossary’ of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* states:

Some souls, after realizing their oneness with Brahman in samadhi, come down to the plane of relative consciousness. In this state they retain a very faint feeling of ego so that they may teach spiritual knowledge to others. This ego called by Sri Ramakrishna the ‘ego of knowledge’, does not altogether efface their knowledge of oneness with Brahman even in the relative state of consciousness. The bhakta, the lover of God, coming down to the relative plane after having attained samadhi, retains the ‘I-consciousness’ by which he feels himself to be a lover, a child, or a servant of God. Sri Ramakrishna called this the ‘devotee ego’, the ‘child ego’, or the ‘servant ego’ (1034).

Sri Ramakrishna tells us why he often switches between bhakti and jnana: ‘The jnanis think of God without form. They don’t accept

the Divine Incarnation. ... I accept God with form when I am in the company of people who believe in the ideal, and I also agree with those who believe in the formless God’ (128). Once again, the implied affirmation here is that bhakti and jnana are non-different and that the former by itself is also a guaranteed path to the attainment of the Self. As the bhakta merges in the universal Self, which includes the personal God, the bhakta’s Chosen Deity ceases to be only a personal God. The vision of Rama, brought about through the mediacy of the image of Ramalala, helped Sri Ramakrishna realize that Rama ‘pervades the whole universe as Spirit and Consciousness; that He is its Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer; that, in still another aspect, He is the transcendental Brahman, without form, attribute, or name’ (24).

It is not a contradiction that Sri Ramakrishna preferred to remain as a bhakta though he had attained the highest jnana very early in his sadhana, because he felt that ‘a mere jnani is a monotonous person. He always analyses, saying: “It is not this, not this. The world is like a dream” (479). This was his colourful way of saying that bhakti is often a more attractive path for us to seek self-realization and, in the process, enjoy a servant-master relationship with our Chosen Deity. In the end, of course, the two are not in mutual opposition:

There is no difference between supreme Bhakti and the supreme Jnana. The supreme Bhakti is to realise God as the form of Prema (love) itself. If you see the loving form of God manifest everywhere and in everything, how can you hate or injure others? That realisation of love can never come so long as there is the least desire in the heart, or what Shri Ramakrishna used to say, attachment for Kama-kanchana (sense-pleasure and wealth). In the perfect realisation of love, even the consciousness of one’s own

body does not exist. Also, the supreme Jnana is to realise the oneness everywhere, to see one's own self as the Self in everything. That too cannot come so long as there is the least consciousness of the ego (Aham).<sup>5</sup>

This is how we find the importance of Sri Ramakrishna's message of combining devotion and knowledge.

### **Sri Ramakrishna's Love and Nature**

A very benevolent outcome of Sri Ramakrishna's bhakta personality is his immense love for his disciples and concern for their well-being. He was able to accommodate the followers of the emergent Brahmo movement in his scheme of spiritual thinking as part of God's will, though its Westernized followers were by and large this-worldly. He never held their Western acculturation against them. Far from it, he fervently hoped for and worked patiently towards showing them the Truth as he *experienced* it personally, as opposed to how they understood it intellectually. His love and concern for people's well-being extended far beyond the circle of his disciples:

people of every faith, followers of every conviction, good doers and evildoers, the pure and the promiscuous—all were attracted by the simple magnetism of Sri Ramakrishna's character and his utter sincerity. He was indeed a messiah who inwardly suffered for each and every one of them. He just could not remain aloof, enjoying by himself his hard-earned proximity to God—neither did he allow his dear Narendranath to do so.

A special knack of Sri Ramakrishna was that he was able to explain complex philosophical concepts in a simple straightforward way. For example, maya could be a difficult concept for the uninitiated and could lead to endless questions. To Sri Ramakrishna, however, it is 'nothing but the egotism of the embodied soul. This egotism has covered everything like a veil. "All troubles come to an end when the ego dies." If by the grace of God a man but once realizes that he is not the doer, then he at once becomes a jivan-mukta. Though living in the body, he is liberated. He has nothing else to fear.'<sup>6</sup>

My first acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna was at the age of sixteen from a prescribed text



for the intermediate class. I was stunned to hear the Master's answer to Vivekananda's question, 'Sir, have you seen God?' The Master said, 'Yes, I have seen God. I have seen him more tangibly than I see you. I have talked to him more intimately than I am talking to you. ... But, my child, who wants to see God? People shed jugs of tears for money, wife, and children. But if they would weep for God for only one day they would surely see him' (57).

I kept asking myself: 'Are there any people who have really seen God? Is it possible to see God at all? What does he look like? Which of the pictures that I have seen in books does he resemble?' Swami Vivekananda, the original questioner, provides the answer: 'He is principle, not person. You and I are all Personal Gods. The absolute God of the universe, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe, is impersonal principle. You and I, the cat, rat, devil, and ghost, all those are Its persons—all are Personal Gods. You want to worship Personal Gods. It is the worship of your own self.'<sup>7</sup>

There is no better way to conclude this essay than by quoting Vivekananda's final assessment of his Master: 'He was the concentrated embodiment of how many previous Avatars! Even spending the whole life in religious austerity, we could not understand it. Therefore one has to speak about him with caution and restraint. As are one's capacities, so he fills one with spiritual ideas. One spray from the full ocean of his spirituality, if realised, will make gods of men. Such a synthesis of universal ideas you will not find in the history of the world again' (7.262).

In utter reverence he points out: 'Sri Ramakrishna is not exactly what the ordinary followers have comprehended him to be. He had infinite moods and phases. Even if you might form an idea of the limits of Brahmajnana, the knowledge of the Absolute, you could not have any

idea of the unfathomable depths of his mind! Thousands of Vivekanandas may spring forth through one gracious glance of his eyes!' (6.479).

The terms 'child' and *paramahamsa* are often used to refer to Sri Ramakrishna, who himself affirms the kinship of the child and the *paramahamsa*: 'The paramahamsa is like a five-year-old child. He sees everything filled with Consciousness. ... He cannot distinguish between a stranger and a relative. He isn't particular about worldly relationships. ... He doesn't keep any track of his whereabouts. He sees everything as Brahman. He is indifferent to his own movements.'<sup>8</sup>

Sri Ramakrishna was at once a child and a sage, a devotee and a saint, a priest and a *paramahamsa* in whom the twin currents of bhakti and jnana ran together, not to compete but to complement each other. The country boy from Kamarpukur who relished listening to and telling riveting tales of the Puranic gods was God himself. The subject identified itself with the object, the immortal Logos, which is beyond all grammatical classification. Sri Ramakrishna is the recipient of our humble admiration and the wellspring of our constant inspiration. ☸

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# **Swami Vivekananda in Chicago: New Findings**

**Asim Chaudhuri**

**T**HAT WAS THE TITLE of my book where I chronicled Swamiji's activities in Chicago. There I wrote:

Swamiji left Chicago for Madison, Minneapolis and Des Moines on November 20. He left

Des Moines on November 30, but was in Minneapolis again on December 14. Up until now it was not known whether he had come back to Chicago after Des Moines and then gone again to Minneapolis, or had spent those intermediate fourteen days in other towns in the corn country. But now we know he visited the People's Church, and addressed Rev. Thomas' congregation, most likely on December 10. The subject was 'The Divinity of Man', and the *Unity* reported the entire speech almost word for word on December 14.<sup>1</sup>

After one hundred and three years I found the article in 1997 and it has been reproduced in the book (159–64). Since the *Unity* reported it on 14 December 1893 and the Chicago pastor Hiram Washington Thomas introduced Swamiji before the lecture, according to the *Unity*, I assumed that the speech was delivered on the Sunday before 14 December, which was 10 December, when Dr Thomas's congregation usually met in the church. But I was wrong; I missed the announcement of that lecture that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* of 26 November 1893. Since Swamiji was then in Des Moines, Iowa, I did not look at the Chicago newspapers. Others have probably missed it too for the same reason. The announcement is shown on the left.

Central Music Hall,

"THE DIVINITY OF MAN."



Monday Eve., Dec. 4.

Swami Vive Kananda,  
The Hindoo Monk.

After the lecture questions may be asked by any in the audience relative to his people, their customs, conditions, etc., which will be both instructive and entertaining.

Tickets 35c, 50c, 75c, and \$1.00. On sale Monday, Nov. 27. Lecture at 8:15 sharp.



That means the lecture was delivered on Monday, 4 December at the Central Music Hall, and since there was an admission charge, it could not have been a lecture from a church pulpit. For delivering sermons, various pastors had used the Central Music Hall, but this time the lecture was most probably sponsored by the Slayton Lyceum Bureau that he was in contract with at that time. The Bureau had their office in the same building and managed the lecture appearances at the auditorium of the Central Music Hall (166). The announcement also indicates that Swamiji came back to Chicago from Des Moines for that lecture.

Before or during the Parliament Swamiji's images appeared in the Chicago newspapers as caricature-like line drawings. The significant thing about Swamiji's image in this lecture announcement is that it was probably the first time his image had appeared in the US, in a Chicago newspaper, as the reproduction of one of his '1893 Chicago photographs', most probably of the one above. Q&P

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# **Sri Ramakrishna: Transforming Lives**

**Sibatosh Bagchi**

**S**RI RAMAKRISHNA described himself as the Karmanasha River and as the Farashdanga, French colony.<sup>1</sup> The Karmanasha, which literally means ‘destroyer of karma’, is a river crossing through the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Just as one bathes in the Ganga to wash away one’s sins, so also Sri Ramakrishna compared himself to the Karmanasha River, which puts an end to all karmas when one takes a dip into it. Chandernagore—now known as Chandannagar—is a part of the Hooghly district of West Bengal that was once under French rule. In Bengali it was called Farashdanga, French colony. Any individual committing a crime in the then Bengal Presidency, which was under British rule, could slip into this French colony to escape arrest and consequent punishment.

## **Avatar: A Source of Power**

Sri Ramakrishna gives a very lucid example regarding the spiritual strength of an avatara or of great rishis like Narada: ‘A hollow piece of driftwood somehow manages to float; but it sinks if even a bird sits on it. But Narada and sages of his kind are like a huge log that not only can float across to the other shore but can carry many animals and other creatures as well. A steamship itself crosses the ocean and also carries people across.’<sup>2</sup> An avatara has to take care of the spiritual demands of millions of people. In another context Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, says:

The Master was able to supply to every man just what he needed. Sometimes a man would come from a distant place with his heart panting for

God, but seeing the room full of people, he would shrink back and hide himself in a dim corner. Without a word, Sri Ramakrishna would walk to him and touch him, and in a moment he was illumined.

By that touch, Sri Ramakrishna really swallowed ninety-nine percent of the man’s karma. Taking others’ karma was the reason he had his last long illness. He used to tell us: ‘The people whose karma I have taken think that they are attaining salvation through their own strength. They do not understand that it is because I have taken their karma on me.’<sup>3</sup>

There are many other similar instances that exemplify Sri Ramakrishna’s spiritual power and knowledge. Swami Vivekananda narrated one incident that proves Sri Ramakrishna as the embodiment of infinite knowledge:

When I began lecturing in Chicago and other cities, I had to deliver every week some twelve or fifteen lectures at times. This excessive strain on the body and mind would exhaust me to a degree. I seemed to run short of subjects for lectures and was anxious where to find new topics for the morrow’s lectures. New thoughts seemed altogether scarce. One day, after the lecture, I lay thinking of what means to adopt next. The thought induced a sort of slumber, and in that state I heard as if somebody standing by me was lecturing—many new ideas and new veins of thought, which I had scarcely heard or thought of in my life. On awaking I remembered them and reproduced them in my lecture. I cannot enumerate how often this phenomenon took place. Many, many days did I hear such lectures while lying in bed. Sometimes the lecture would be

delivered in such a loud voice that the inmates of adjacent rooms would hear the sound and ask me the next day, ‘With whom, Swamiji, were you talking so loudly last night?’ I used to avoid the question somehow. Ah, it was a wonderful phenomenon.<sup>4</sup>

Sri Ramakrishna still helps his sincere devotees at the time of crisis. Swami Yatishwarananda, a venerable monk of the Ramakrishna Order, narrates:

In 1933 I was sent to Weisbaden [Germany] for some specific work. On the journey I was the only passenger in the second-class berth of the ship—feeling quite nervous. Suddenly I felt some divine presence around me that was about to engulf me from all sides. The presence was quite palpable by my body and mind—in the midst of this ambience was Sri Ramakrishna’s voice. He was pointing his finger towards himself and said: ‘Don’t be nervous. This time (in this incarnation), infinite power is being manifested through this body. This (I) will protect you.’ After this incident I could feel his divine presence always within me.<sup>5</sup>

Sri Ramakrishna’s infinite spiritual dimensions were revealed to different devotees in different forms. If we recall some of these incidents, we find that he would fulfil the wishes of the concerned devotee to manifest himself as the devotee’s Ishta Devata, Chosen Ideal, to satisfy his or her spiritual urge and also to bring peace to the minds of many devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna revealed himself as Shiva and Kali to Mathur Babu, who after this vision totally

surrendered at his lotus feet. Swami Abhedananda had a vision of all the incarnations and acharyas merging into the body of Sri Ramakrishna. To Aghormani Devi, Gopaler Ma, Sri Ramakrishna was verily Gopala, the child Sri Krishna. He came as Sri Gauranga to his guru Bhairavi Brahmani. Swami Turiyananda saw Sri Ramakrishna inside the Jagannatha Temple at Puri. One day the devotee Nistarini Ghosh found her Ishta Devata, Sri Krishna, in Sri Ramakrishna when he went into deep samadhi in her house at Ramakrishnapur, Howrah. Many are such examples in the lives of devotees and disciples.

*Nistarini Ghosh*



## Transforming Lives

Sri Ramakrishna has given solace and support to millions of people, as a senior monk of the Order says:

Popular biographical accounts of Sri Ramakrishna's life may give the impression that he lived a happy life giving talks, singing and dancing. But the tremendous concern he had for the welfare of other people, his eagerness to help suffering people, and the difficulties he had to endure for this are seldom noticed. From early in the morning till late in the night Sri Ramakrishna spent most of his time advising, guiding, inspiring, awakening the people who thronged to him. Anybody could walk into his room at any time of the day or night. And nobody who went to him never returned without receiving something life-transforming, awakening or strengthening from him. In the process of redeeming sinners and Bohemians, he had to undergo vicarious suffering. ... It was to immortalize Sri Ramakrishna's self-sacrifice for the welfare of suffering humanity that Swamiji gave him the epithet *pranārpana*, 'One who gave his life for others'.<sup>6</sup>

Innumerable people visited Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar; some of them met him only a couple of times, but that was enough to dramatically change their lives. I would like to point out to six individuals from the many.

Girishchandra Ghosh is the most striking example of Sri Ramakrishna's divine grace. Girish's gradual transformation of mind was also due to his total and unconditional surrender to Sri Ramakrishna. He possessed unflinching devotion to his guru. Once Girish 'was brooding with a broken heart over his own misdeeds when the master in a semi-conscious mood spoke out "Girish Ghosh, don't worry about it; people will be astonished at the marvellous change that will come over you."'<sup>7</sup> In every avatara's lila there is a character who attains a marked mental elevation

through the infinite love and compassion of the guru and, in turn, this character becomes an example to millions of other people. In the Sri Ramakrishna incarnation it was Girish who played this crucial role. It was he who triggered the Kalpataru phenomenon on 1 January 1886, when Sri Ramakrishna blessed all the assembled devotees with his profound words: 'I bless you all. Be illumined!' (405). Girish attained a high spiritual state of mind towards the end of his life.

A less known character in the Ramakrishna movement was Bhavatarini Mukhopadhyay, the wife of Upendranath Mukhopadhyay. Her name Bhavatarini was given by Sri Ramakrishna himself. She was related to the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi. It is known from her autobiography<sup>8</sup> that she came in close contact with Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother during her childhood and adolescence. Her marriage with Upendranath was proposed by none other than Sri Ramakrishna. However, at a very young age she lost her husband in 1919 and also her only son after a few years. These incidents compelled her to relocate to Varanasi, where she lived for the rest of her life. With Sri Ramakrishna in the corner of her heart, she lived a very austere and intense spiritual life up to the age of nearly one hundred years. She used to remain in very exalted states during those days and used to have innumerable visions of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

Vijay Krishna Goswami, doyen of the Brahmo movement of Bengal, frequented Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar in search of God, as the conventional Brahmo ideas of that time could not satisfy him. He had deep respect for Sri Ramakrishna, as could be seen from this comment: 'It is difficult to understand him (meaning the Master) unless he reveals himself. Here alone is the one hundred percent manifestation of God. ... I have now realized who you are. You don't have to tell me.'<sup>9</sup> Sri Ramakrishna was very

happy with Vijay's comprehensive knowledge about him and in the process revealed himself to Vijay. Due to this super human influence Vijay had a miraculous and complete transformation in his spiritual life. He gave up his connection with the Brahmo around 1886–7 and started a further inner journey towards spirituality.

Rasik Hari, a sweeper at the Dakshineswar Temple, had the unconditional grace of the Master, who was an oasis in the blazing mental desert of Rasik. A low-caste pariah, Rasik would always hesitate to prostrate before the Master lest the then rigid caste system of Bengal could object. He was not allowed to enter the temple or touch the feet of other priests. Though Sri Ramakrishna knew all these restrictions, he used to talk to Rasik very freely. But Rasik was disturbed at heart for not being able to touch Sri Ramakrishna's feet, in spite of his high regard. One day Rasik was desperate and fell at Sri Ramakrishna's feet while the latter was coming back from the pine grove. Rasik grabbed his feet and said: 'Thakur, what will happen to me?' This sincere surrender of a devotee was accepted

by the Master, who went into samadhi. After he returned to the normal state, he touched Rasik's head and said: 'You will see me at the time of death.' Rasik survived another two years after the Master's demise. While dying, Rasik's face beamed with joy and cried out: 'Father, you have come! You have not forgotten me.' It was a divine scene showing that the Master never failed his true devotees.<sup>10</sup>

The story of Manmatha is equally enchanting. Sri Ramakrishna's grace fell on him in a most unusual way. Manmatha, a famous gymnast and wrestler of Baghbazar, was hired by Hiralal, Yogin-ma's brother, to frighten away Sri Ramakrishna when he came to Yogin-ma's house. Hiralal did not like his sister's frequent visits to the Master at Dakshineswar. Manmatha was there at the scene when Sri Ramakrishna arrived and heard a few words of the Master. He was so captivated by those words that he fell at the Master's feet and wanted the Master to forgive him for his nefarious intention. The Master asked him to come to Dakshineswar one day. On the first visit Sri Ramakrishna accompanied him to the

*Picture by an unknown artist depicting Rasik Hari surrendering himself to Sri Ramakrishna's feet*



Kali temple and there blessed him. The next time also Manmatha received some advice from the Master. But he never disclosed anything about the grace he received. Within a couple of years Manmatha had a miraculous transformation and became a totally different man. He always used to utter with folded hands, ‘Priyanath, Priyanath’ (O my beloved Lord). He came to the Baranagore Monastery in 1890 when Swami Vivekananda and other swamis were there. His great transformation by the divine touch of Sri Ramakrishna surprised all the swamis.<sup>11</sup>

The last example would be of a gentleman from Jabalpur, a postgraduate who came to meet Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. His name could not be ascertained from any source. He was an out and out non-believer but also a very simple man. Sri Ramakrishna cordially embraced him and requested him to accept a seat in his room. He said: ‘Sir, I don’t believe in anything, no God, nothing.’ The Master said: ‘Well, if I request you to make one prayer by saying that “if there is any reality behind this universe, let that illuminate my mind,” will you agree to it? Do you have any objection to this sort of prayer?’ The man from Jabalpur agreed happily to this proposal. After a couple of months he came to Dakshineswar and fell at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna: ‘Master, you have saved me. I got the answer to my prayer and am totally fulfilled.’<sup>12</sup>

In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we find the Master praying to the Divine Mother for the welfare of all devotees: ‘Mother, may those who come to You have all their desires fulfilled! But please don’t make them give up everything at once, Mother. Well, You may do whatever You like in the end. If You keep them in the world, Mother, then please reveal Yourself to them now and then. Otherwise, how will they live? How will they be encouraged if they don’t see You

once in a while? But You may do whatever You like in the end.’<sup>13</sup>

If we pray to Sri Ramakrishna, we too will be transformed. Once, after singing songs on Sri Chaitanya, Swami Vivekananda soliloquized: ‘He is actually distributing love. Love, devotion, knowledge, liberation, and whatever one desires—Gora [Sri Ramakrishna] is bestowing upon us whatever he wishes. What wonderful power!’<sup>14</sup> 

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# **Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Nature**

**Ms Rajani Rao U**

**S**WAMI VIVEKANANDA's Vedantic teachings not only highlight the status of human beings regarding the goal of life but also give guidelines for attaining that goal. Swamiji's profound insights bring the high philosophy of Vedanta down to the common people. He discusses many philosophical and spiritual issues *in extenso*, while addressing other points in a general way. There were not many environmental problems during his time; therefore, he did not deal with them in detail. However, understanding his views on nature can help us frame an idea about Environmentalism based on traditional Vedantic concepts as interpreted by Swamiji.

## **Concept of Nature**

The word 'nature' has many meanings; it comes from the Latin *natura*, which means "course of things; natural character, constitution, quality; the universe," literally "birth", from *natus* "born".<sup>1</sup> In Indian philosophy nature is called Prakriti. Understanding the importance of nature in the scheme of things is essential, as human beings are also participants in the natural processes. We are made of the same stuff that makes the external world and our bodies and minds are part of 'nature'. Thus our behaviour and actions affect nature and in turn nature affects our behaviour and actions. Nature's effect on us is very powerful; it can mould civilizations and cultures. Human societies learn to adjust to natural surroundings and, once settled, slowly start dominating the surroundings.

Nature is also defined as 'vital force' or 'functions' or 'needs'. It is also referred to as the

power that produces the phenomena of the material world. We see that everything in nature is interrelated; nothing in nature is independent. There is a constant change of one form or force into another. We cannot hurt one thing without serious consequences. Everything in the universe is interconnected.

Swami Vivekananda used the term 'nature' in three different senses, to mean (i) external physical nature or environment, (ii) propensities in human beings, and (iii) the soul or Atman of an individual. According to Swamiji, the whole of the phenomena, external and internal, is nature and is one. The internal nature is known as the forces inherent in the human being producing sensations, perceptions, and concepts, while the external nature is known as the forces related to the phenomena seen around us. Explaining further Swamiji states that the constitution of the body and the mind of a human being, as well as of the whole world, are based upon the three forces of nature called *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, which stand for balance, activity, and inertness respectively. These forces or *gunas* are in a constant state of flux. Depending on the predominance of any one of the *gunas* our mind reflects that force. In his words: 'The very fact that the external force can somehow evoke the internal force shows that somewhere they join each other—they must be continuous and, therefore, basically the same force. Thought force becomes nerve force, muscular force; muscular and nervous force becomes thought force.'<sup>2</sup>

Swamiji explains both the internal and the external natures thus:

According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call Akasha. It is the omnipresent, all-penetrating existence. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasha. It is the Akasha that becomes the air, that becomes the liquids, that becomes the solids; it is the Akasha that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets; it is the Akasha that becomes the human body, the animal body, the plants, every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists. It cannot be perceived; it is so subtle that it is beyond all ordinary perception; it can only be seen when it has become gross, has taken form. At the beginning of creation there is only this Akasha. At the end of the cycle the solids, the liquids, and the gases all melt into the Akasha again, and the next creation similarly proceeds out of this Akasha.

By what is this Akasha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana. Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe. ... It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the Prana that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents, as thought force. From thought down to the lowest force, everything is but the manifestation of Prana. The sum total of all forces in the universe, mental or physical, when resolved back to their original state, is called Prana (1.147–8).

### **Humans and Nature**

A human being is self-centered and prone to exploiting nature. We fail to recognize that nature is not dead matter, that it is throbbing with life. Life can be found everywhere—from the deepest oceans to the atmosphere. Can glorifying this living aspect of nature help us create a deeper and higher bond with it? We seem to have lost our

relationship with nature and consequently are disconnecting ourselves from it. One finds the concept of nature as a living force in almost all the tribal and folk traditions of the world. Nature has been venerated by these people as they have discovered a deep kinship between them, their society, and the world around. Today we are distancing ourselves from nature and are thus losing our emotional and spiritual bonds with it. Almost all environmental issues can be solved if we reconnect with nature.

There is another higher aspect of the human nature that Swamiji points out: ‘The whole history of humanity is a continuous fight against the so-called laws of nature, and man gains in the end’ (2.104). If we continuously obey all the laws of nature, we will become like a wall or a cow, which do not go against the rigorous laws of nature and so they do not evolve. We struggle against nature and this makes us evolve faster. Swamiji states that the external nature is majestic, with inestimable powers, but he further elaborates that there is an even more marvellous nature, the internal one, which we are generally unaware of. We cannot always fight against the external laws of nature, but we can do so with the internal laws that govern the mind.

Struggling against the laws of nature does not mean desiccating nature but understanding the subtle laws that govern the mind in order to transcend them. According to Swamiji, we have to first scrutinize the data within us to be able to understand our minds. Relatively, it is much easier to examine the facts in the external world, with the help of various instruments developed by us, than to examine our minds, as there are no instruments to assist us in understanding our minds. The way to understand and observe our minds, according to Swamiji, is by the practice of yoga: ‘The science of Raja-Yoga, in the first place, proposes to give us such a means of observing the

internal states. The instrument is the mind itself. The power of attention, when properly guided, and directed towards the internal world, will analyse the mind, and illumine facts for us. ... This is our only means of knowledge. Everyone is using it, both in the external and the internal world' (1.129).

As we struggle against the internal laws governing the mind, we rise higher. We then come to the understanding that we have still a higher nature, the Atman. We are to identify with our real internal nature, the Atman, which is ultimately one with Brahman, the all-pervading Reality, the ground of all phenomena. All our struggles are towards realizing our real nature as the Atman-Brahman, which is imperishable and immortal.

In Swamiji's words: "The whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature." The very reason of nature's existence is for the education of the soul; it has no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have knowledge, and through knowledge free itself. If we remember this always, we shall never be attached to nature; we shall know that nature is a book in which we are to read, and that when we have gained the required knowledge, the book is of no more value to us' (1.57). If this book of nature lies tattered and torn, the outcome of environmental degradation, how can we be ever enriched and finally get liberated?

### **Conclusion**

The central idea of Vedanta is oneness—one existence, one life, one world. Swamiji states: 'All is One, which manifests Itself, either as thought, or life, or soul, or body, and the difference is only in degree' (2.299). The only and real solution for the global environmental degradation being experienced by us now is the realization of the oneness of all creation.

There are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence; the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer. The finest is what we call spirit; the grossest, the body. And just as it is here in microcosm, it is exactly the same in the macrocosm. The universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God (2.16).

Even an intellectual understanding of this principle helps produce concrete answers to environmental problems. Therefore, it is clear that the crisis is not external but internal. Swamiji puts it succinctly: 'The more we think of ourselves as separate from the Whole, the more miserable we become' (2.334).

Swamiji says that a human being encapsulates three levels: physical, mental, and spiritual. The moment we look at ourselves from a single perspective, without considering the other two, we can no longer understand the human being in its totality, nor can we understand the universe. Thus Swamiji's concept of nature has three dimensions: the innermost nature, the Atman; the inner nature, the mind; and the external nature, the physical world. If we realize our innermost nature, we then realize that there is no difference between the external and the internal natures. The way to access our inner nature is, as Swamiji advises, to practise yoga in any of its four expressions—karma, bhakti, jnana, and raja—according to our natural tendencies, and finally reach the goal. ☸

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# **Those Who Defected from Swami Vivekananda**

**Sudesh Garg**

**I**N 1893, AT THE PARLIAMENT of Religions in Chicago, an unknown, unheralded, penniless monk from India walked amidst an august assembly comprising the best minds of the West. And when he spoke, the force and fire of his eloquence and the grandeur of his spiritual message flashed out at every turn. The truths he spoke were not found in their books. They were startled and enraptured at what they had heard and their conventional ideas and ideals underwent a transformation. This monk was Swami Vivekananda.

Is it to be wondered that hundreds were captivated by the loftiness of his ideas? Before leaving the West he had the satisfaction of having many earnest disciples and supporters who gave up all the comforts and luxuries of the West and dedicated themselves to the furtherance of Swamiji's dream and mission—the rejuvenation of his motherland and the world. It is to J J Goodwin whom we owe the record of much of Swamiji's thoughts and teachings, to the Seviers whom we owe the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, and it is because of Sister Nivedita that we have an institution for the education of girls. There were many others who by being in contact with Swami Vivekananda's elevating teachings, magnetism, and purity of character developed a lifelong reverent friendship and genuine admiration for him and his ideals. Many of them visited the land of their prophet and supported any project Swamiji desired to undertake. On the other hand, there were others who, in spite

of having come in the orbit of Swamiji's divine radiance, finally defected from him. Among them there were both Indians and non-Indians; the present article focuses only on those non-Indians who first became followers of Swamiji but later deserted him.

There was a period of some two years, between the end of 1897 and the end of 1899, during which defections and betrayals came upon him one after another. Among those who defected were Leon Landsberg, Marie Louise, and Dr Street, who were ordained into sannyasa by Swamiji. Besides these, there were Henrietta Müller, Mrs Ashton Jonson, and Mr Edward T Sturdy. Who can guess why they changed their minds?

## ***Leon Landsberg***

Before been taken into Swamiji's circle with the vows of poverty and chastity and the name of Swami Kripananda, Leon Landsberg was a newspaper man employed on the staff of one of the most prominent New York papers. By birth he was a Russian Jew.

In the last days of January 1895 Swamiji and Leon Landsberg lived together at 54 West 33rd Street, New York. It was a poor and unfashionable area, but Swamiji was tired with excessive lecturing and travelling. He had broken with the lecture bureau, abandoned the sumptuous meals and dinner invitations of persons of wealth, and was living on bean soup and barley rice by choice, cooked in his poor quarters. He

wanted to teach and give intensive training to earnest-minded people. Swamiji wrote to Mrs Hale: 'Between Mr Landsberg [later Swami Kripananda] and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a sannyasin now than I ever was in America.'<sup>1</sup> When Swamiji arrived in New York on 6 December 1895, from England, together with Swami Kripananda he made his headquarters at 228 West 39th Street, where the latter had been living and holding classes during the previous month. The two spacious rooms they now occupied were used for Swamiji's regular scriptural classes.

During Swamiji's absence from America Swami Kripananda tried to keep up the message of Vedanta by spreading interest in this divine philosophy. His letter of 18 January 1896, published in the *Brahmavadin*, gives an account of its progress:

While our beloved Swami Vivekananda was away in England disseminating his sublime teaching with well-deserved success, the seed of truth sown in America did not die away. ... His followers continued his work eagerly, holding regular well-attended meetings, in which they endeavoured to enlighten each other on the difficult questions of Vedanta philosophy, urged one another to make the moral lessons it inculcates a living reality in their daily lives, and, by expanding the circle of its followers (2.57).

He carried Swamiji's message to other cities and succeeded in forming new centres for the propagation of the doctrine of love for God and universal brotherhood.

Swami Kripananda's letter of 12 January 1896 reveals how Swamiji had to cope with antagonistic forces in the US:

At the time the American mind was coated with thick layers of superstition and bigotry. ... There is no theory so absurd, no doctrine so irrational, no claim so extravagant, no fraud so transparent, but can find their numerous believers and a ready market. ... In this bedlam of religious cranks, in this devil's kitchen of fraud, imposture, and knavery, the Swami appeared to teach the lofty religion of the Vedas, the profound philosophy of the Vedanta, the sublime wisdom of the ancient Rishis. ... A task sufficient to discourage the bravest heart, to dispirit the most powerful will. But the Swami was not the man to be deterred by difficulties. Poor and friendless, with no other support than God and his love for mankind, he set patiently to work, determined not to give up until the message he had to deliver would reach the hearts of truth-seeking men and women. ... And all those untrue and erratic existences hid themselves, like bats at the approach of daylight, in their haunts before this apostle of Truth (2.62-4).

In a letter dated 19 February 1896 Swami Kripananda wrote:

The strong current of religious thought sent out in his lectures and writings, the powerful impetus given by his teachings to the pursuit of truth without regard to inherited superstitions and prejudices, though working silently and unconsciously, is exercising a beneficial and lasting effect on the popular mind and so becoming an important factor in the spiritual uplifting of society. ... People are quick to appreciate the grandeur and beauty of a system which, equally as a philosophy and a religion, appeals to the heart as well as to the reason, and satisfies all the religious cravings of human (2.67-8).

It seems incredible that Swami Kripananda, who wrote these letters and lived in the constant atmosphere of Swamiji's spiritual austerity and divine radiance, quietly deserted him.

### **Marie Louise**

Marie Louise, a Frenchwoman, was a naturalized US citizen who resided in New York. She was known in liberal circles as a materialist, socialist, and a prominent member of the Manhattan Liberal Club. She was also known in the media and on the platform as Mme Marie Louise, a fearless, progressive, advanced woman, who was always in the forefront of the battle and ahead of her times.

Marie Louise was admitted into the spiritual Order by Swami Vivekananda at Thousand Island Park with the name of Swami Abhayananda. With her characteristic zeal, she spread in different parts of the United States the light she had received and even founded an Advaita

*Marie Louise*



Society in Chicago. She arrived in India on 24 February 1899 to pay respect to the memory of her guru's guru, Sri Ramakrishna, and attend his birth anniversary celebrations. As it was due on 19 March she first visited Bombay and Madras and lectured there on Vedanta philosophy, as advised by Swamiji. The people of Bombay and Madras accorded her a fitting welcome. The *Mahratta* of Pune wrote about her on 5 March: 'One of his [Swami Vivekananda's] disciples, drawn to India by the coming anniversary festival of Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Calcutta, is an American lady journalist bearing the garb and name of a Hindu sannyasi, Swami Abhayananda. ... She is no longer a theoretical convert ... but an actual sannyasi. ... Swami Abhyananda is no insignificant woman, nor has she embraced Hinduism without carefully studying the Vedas and the Upanishads' (2.445).

She reached Calcutta on 7 March evening and was given a grand reception by the Ramakrishna Mission at Balaram Babu's house. She took part in the birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, held for the first time at Belur Math, and gave an address. At the invitation of the Ramakrishna Mission, Dacca, she left with Swami Virajananda for Dacca on 5 April and stayed there for two weeks. More than once she appeared in public to join the Hari sankirtan with a bag of tulsi beads in hand, a garland of Rudraksha round her neck, and uttering *haribol*.

After she returned to Calcutta, the change in her attitude towards Swamiji and the Order was clearly visible from the letters Sister Nivedita wrote to Miss Macleod:

*March 30:* She [Swami Abhyananda] did not care to listen to all he [the Swami] said—but went off with a book, fretted because she could not get away, and so on, and inveighed

against eating on the floor and with fingers in his presence.

She does not really love Swami I think, and she says my love is very foolish and emotional. ... Such greatness, such sweetness, such humility, as I see in him [the Swami] towards her, I could not have imagined. ...

Abhayananda has been grumbling that all the monks are *my* slaves!

*April 5:* She is so rude, raving about the dirtiness and inconvenience of Hindu homes in the presence of her host and hostess, and abusing the monks for their inattention to her. ...

*May 8:* Abhayananda, who came back from Dacca, sore about money and Kalikrishna's conduct, and not scrupling to say dreadful things of Swamiji.

*May 9:* She says people brought her money in Dacca and Kalikrishna [her host] absorbed it all, and that she was simply being 'run' by 'Swami and Co.' for their own benefit (2.446-7).

In the beginning of June she left for the US. Another reason for Swami Abhayananda's defection seems to be her desire for money, as we learn from Swamiji's letter of 6 June 1902 to Mrs Bull: 'Marie Louise [Abhayananda] is here, as a follower of Chaitanya. Some rich men, I hear, have taken her up. ... She wanted money. May the Lord give her a lot!'<sup>3</sup> How could she have remained a Vedantist and a follower of Swamiji, who upheld renunciation of all earthly vanities as the highest ideal?

### **Dr Street**

Swamiji gave the vows of sannyasa to a Dr Street, naming him Swami Yogananda. Kripananda wrote in the *Brahmavadin* in 1896 that 'the impressive ceremony was performed in the presence of the other sannyasi [evidently Abhayananda had come from Brooklyn] and Brahmachari disciples' (2.69). Who these brahmacharins were

we do not know. One remembers, however, that Swamiji had given the first monastic vows to five disciples at Thousand Island Park and probably had made other brahmacharins since his return from England.

Of Dr Street, the third sannyasin Swamiji made in the US, he wrote to Sturdy on 13 February 1896: 'Today another Sannyasin has been added to the list. This time it is a man who is a genuine American and a religious teacher of some standing in the country. He was Dr Street. He is now Yogananda, as his leaning is all towards Yoga.'<sup>4</sup> Swami Yogananda had, in fact, developed certain psychic powers before he had met Swamiji, as one learns from Swami Abhedananda, who met Yogananda in New York in 1898. Abhedananda wrote in his diary:

On March 3 [1898] Swami Yogananda ... called on me and spent the morning talking on psychic experiences he had acquired by crystal gazing. He could foretell events by looking intently on a ball of white crystal placing it on a small table in front. This is called *Tratak Yoga* in India. He had practised this branch of Hatha Yoga for many years before he met Swami Vivekananda and attended his classes on Raja Yoga in New York city [*sic*]. Swami Vivekananda was pleased to know him and admired his psychic powers. ... He was a student of Egyptian mysticism and wrote a book on that subject. He was a clairvoyant, that is, with the help of his crystal he gained the psychic vision of things or events happening at a long distance. ...

The only other bit of information that the present writer knows about this first Yankee sannyasin is that by June of 1896 he had started a class in Brooklyn and was in close touch with the New York Vedanta Society (3.519-20).

There seems to be no further information about how or why Dr Street lost contact with the Order.

### **F Henrietta Müller**

She was a fiery woman whose primary interest was the Women's Movement in England, which she worked for and propagated during most of her life. She was closely associated with the efforts to establish women's trade unions. Swamiji's first known invitation to visit England had come to him from Miss F Henrietta Müller. In 1893 she had spoken at the Theosophical Congress at the Parliament of Religions and met Swamiji there. This gave him an opportunity to fulfil his long-held idea of carrying his message to the English people. In London he was received by Miss Henrietta Müller and Mr Sturdy, stayed as a guest at Miss Müller's house, and then moved to Mr Sturdy's house. His new friends arranged for him a public lecture at Prince's Hall in Piccadilly on 22 October 1895. One listener wrote that his lecture entitled 'Self-knowledge' 'electrified the audience with his grand and powerful oratory'.<sup>5</sup>

After Swamiji's departure from England, Miss Müller also left England and arrived in Calcutta during the second week of March 1897. Towards the end of April 1897 Swamiji went to Almora, urged by his doctors and brother monks to recuperate his shattered health. Miss Müller had also reached Almora with Swami Shivananda and Goodwin. Regarding Swamiji's lecture in the English Club at Almora Miss Müller wrote: 'For some time it seemed as though the Teacher, his words, his audience, and the spirit pervading them all, were one. No longer was there any consciousness of "I" and "Thou", of "This" or "That". The different units collected there, were for the time being lost and merged in the spiritual radiance which emanated so

powerfully from the great Teacher, and held them all, more than spell bound' (2.278).

On 11 March 1898, during a meeting arranged under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission at the Star Theatre, presided over by Swamiji, she was called on to say a few words. Miss Müller was hailed with applause when she addressed the audience as 'my dear friends and fellow-countrymen' (2.319). She and the other Western disciples of Swamiji felt, she said, that in coming to India they had come to their home—a home not of spiritual enlightenment, but also the dwelling place of their own kindred. She was a devoted friend and admirer of Swamiji. It was she who, together with Mr and Mrs Sevier and Mr Sturdy, met the expenses of Swamiji's work in England. In March 1898 Swamiji bought a piece of land

*F Henrietta Müller*



over seven acres in extent, together with a building, on the west bank of the Ganga at Belur. It was Miss Müller who gave the money—39,000 rupees—for purchasing the land. She again offered £200 per annum towards the maintenance of Swamiji's proposed project of building a monastery in Calcutta as a training ground for Vedanta teachers.

Miss Müller also went to Darjeeling on 7 April 1898 with Swami Akhandananda to have the company of Swamiji, who had gone there (2.327).

Yet, how strange that Miss Müller severed all connections with Swamiji's Vedanta movement and returned from India full of rancour. Towards the end of her visit in India, she had advertised in the press the severance of her connection with Swamiji's movement and her return to the Christian faith. Though Swamiji must have felt bad on learning this, he knew that changing her religious affiliation and making declarations in the press was not a new thing for her. Back on 16 July 1895 she had announced in the *Madras Mail* that she was leaving the Theosophical Society. It was after this that she had become a follower of Swamiji in England. We learn from Nivedita's letter to Miss Macleod, dated 7 December 1898, the reason she gave for her defection: 'She [Miss Müller] has thrown everything overboard: Sri Ramakrishna, Swami, Meditation. ... She does not hesitate to say that Hinduism is Eroticism to the core. ... All, meditation included, is "dirty". She is now a Bible Christian of a virulent type, and tending towards millennialism. ... I spoke of Swami. "Oh, you won't love him long!" she answered gaily—"Divine Master"!' (2.414).

Swami Saradananda wrote to Miss MacLeod:

A few opinions of Miss Müller will interest and enlighten even yourself. ... We are a nation of black magicians; we mesmerize food and so on, and we have practised that on our dear Granny

[Mrs Bull] and Yum [Miss MacLeod], hence your devotion and love. ... It is her sacred duty to go around in England and elsewhere and enlighten people of these bright experiences. ... No salvation for Swami or us, unless we become Christians as herself, who, the Swami says, has never been baptized (2.415).

Besides the reasons mentioned by Sister Nivedita and Swami Saradananda, the illness of Swamiji might also have influenced Miss Müller's decision. Mrs Ashton Jonson was another of Swamiji's erstwhile English followers whose ardour and enthusiasm had noticeably cooled. She was also of the opinion that a spiritual person should not fall physically ill, an opinion not uncommon among certain religious groups of that period.

### ***Edward T Sturdy***

An Englishman and erstwhile Theosophist, Mr Sturdy had lived for some time at Almora to practise religious disciplines. There he came in contact with Shivananda and learnt from him about Vivekananda, who was then in the West. Returning to England he sent his cordial invitation to Swamiji to visit England as his guest. Swamiji had already received an invitation from Miss Müller. He looked upon these invitations as a divine call for spreading the message of Vedanta among the English. Arriving in London he lived with Miss Müller for a few days and then moved to Mr Sturdy's home. There he lived with Mr and Mrs Sturdy for six weeks. He held long philosophical discussions with his host and helped him study Sanskrit and translate the *Narada Bhakti Sutra* into English.

On 22 October 1895 Mr Sturdy arranged for Swamiji a public lecture at Prince's Hall, bearing the major part of the expenses. Many of his hearers admitted that the swami, in one short hour, was able to express all that was the very

highest in the way of religious thought. His circle of influence steadily increased. Mr Sturdy introduced him to many people and helped him in forming classes. Thus, during Swamiji's first visit to England, his message found a permanent place in the hearts of English people and laid the foundation for his future work. He also had gained a worker like E T Sturdy.

Mr Sturdy depicted Swamiji as 'a yogi coming with love in his heart and the tradition of ages in his memory', and his teachings as 'the life-giving stream of Indian thought' (2,55). It was Sturdy who had the privilege of accompanying Swamiji during the latter's visit to the celebrated Orientalist Professor Max Müller of Oxford.

During the middle of October 1896 Swamiji, together with Captain and Mrs Sevier, were to leave for India. His English students were filled with sadness. Sturdy, the indefatigable worker, organized a farewell to be held in his honour and presented the following address to Swamiji: 'We feel the very deepest regret that you are so soon to leave England... Who have come under the elevating influence of your teaching, and no less of your personal attributes... recognize as the most helpful encouragement to us, one and all, to become real lovers of God in practice as well as in theory. We look forward with keen anticipation to your speedy return to this country'



*Edward T Sturdy*

(2,146). In a letter to a friend in the US he writes: 'Swami Vivekananda left today.

... I am heavy-hearted at the loss of the noblest friend and the purest teacher I have met in this incarnation. I must have stored some exceptional merit in the past to receive such a blessing now. What I longed for all my life I have found in the Swami' (2,150).

In the absence of Swamiji, Sturdy kept the classes going on with the help of Abhedananda. Swamiji had called his brother monk at the request of Sturdy to assist him with the work in England. Who can say what happened that Sturdy's loyalty and enthusiasm for work cooled completely. The edifice of the work in England collapsed within a few months, and by the end of July 1897 Abhedananda had to close his centre in London. According to Sturdy's directions, he sailed for the US to take up the New York work.

When Swamiji arrived in London, on his second visit to the West, Christine Greenstidel and Mary Funke came all the way from the US to receive their guru. Conspicuous by his absence at the dock was Mr Sturdy. This must have come as a disappointment to Swamiji, turning soon into a painful surprise and a rude shock. The unwholesome thoughts Mr Sturdy was harbouring exploded through acrimonious letters to Swamiji, denouncing his ways of teaching and preaching.

*(Continued on page 443)*

# **Swami Vivekananda's '3 Hs' Formula**

**Dr Alpana Ghose**

**I**F THERE WAS ANYTHING I needed most it was a break from my pressing duties and day-to-day household work. Being dragged by my hard and monotonous work schedule, I decided to take some time out for myself. I started enquiring about a suitable place where I could thoroughly relax. I knew that a peaceful environment amidst nature was the only way to fulfil my objective, and Jharkhand suited my requirements. It is an Indian state well known for its beautiful springs, streams, forests, and hills.

There was someone I could contact to help me schedule this small but much needed vacation. It was Nitin, the son of a friend of mine and a Jharkhand Government employee. He stayed in a remote place called Kisko, about 40 km from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand. He had once told me that Kisko would be ideal for a short holiday, as the place had small hills and also a beautiful stream flowing through it. There they had government quarters, one of which could be temporarily put at my disposal. I took this opportunity and one fine morning left for Kisko.

I reached Kisko in just about two and a half hours. And yes, it was what I longed to see. The beauty of the village, with houses scattered here and there, enchanted me more than I expected. The residential quarters were comfortable. I expressed my gratitude to Nitin and decided to make full use of my 'holy'-days.

The sun rose above the hills the next morning when I woke up to witness a celestial play on an exquisite stage of nature. The sight relaxed and refreshed my being and the cheerful twitter of birds in the garden uplifted my feelings.

The place was giving me the required quietude. Now it was time, after breakfast, to sit down at the window with my cherished hobby of writing.

Completely engrossed in my writings, I suddenly heard a vehicle stop in front of the gate. At first I thought that someone might be visiting next door, but to my surprise I saw a greyish blue government jeep right in front of my place. As the gate opened, I wondered who could it be. I went out to investigate and found myself before a beautiful tall lady. 'Good morning ma'am,' she said. This composed lady, with a sari and hair tied back, looked familiar, though I was not able to recognize her. 'I am Razia ma'am. Have you forgotten me?' She looked into my eyes and I almost cried: 'Oh my God! Razia. How on earth are you here? How did you know I have come here?' I bombarded her with questions. She smiled and asked: 'Can I first come in ma'am?' I welcomed her in. More surprises were in store for me.

The pale frail girl that I knew had grown up into a fine lady, like a butterfly coming out of its cocoon. She gladly explained that she was a Block Development Officer (BDO) of the Kisko block. 'Really?' 'Yes ma'am; your "3 Hs" formula has worked wonderfully.' I experienced a joyful tremor inside.

Memories of her flooded my mind. One day, when I was verifying the forms for the BSc (Bachelor of Science) final year students at the teachers' room at our college in Ranchi, a girl came with an exam-application form for verification. The colour of her application form was different from the one for regular students, which indicated she wanted to reappear in the exams. I took her

original documents and started verifying them. My eyes were on those papers when I asked the girl: 'What paper did you fail in? Why don't you people study well? You miss classes regularly and come to college only to have fun and enjoyment?' She said she had failed in the honours subject that I was teaching at the college. Before scolding her further I suddenly saw the name Razia Khatoon (name changed). Without raising my eyes from the papers, I asked: 'How many brothers and sisters do you have?' Faintly I could hear 'eleven, ma'am'. I raised my eyes; she was in tears and stiffened. The teachers present in the room also started staring at her, but in spite of her visible efforts, she could not control her sobs.

I took her to the nearby vacant room and asked her about her family. She said her father was a farmer with a small piece of land, which was the main source of income for their family. She was the eldest of five sisters and six brothers. As usual, the brothers received more attention than the girls, as they were considered to be the future source of earning for the family. Being the eldest daughter she had to look after her younger siblings and do household chores as well. Even then she had a zeal for studies and made every effort to graduate in science. She had managed to pass parts I and II of the graduation exams, but failed in the final part III. That was the reason for her reappearing for the exams. I wanted to know if she regularly attended classes. She lowered her head and kept silent. How could she expect to pass without attending classes? I was curious to know the reason for her not attending the classes and was surprised by the answer. She did not have enough money to pay the everyday bus fares! She would attend the college only two or three times a week. She would collect the study materials in the form of class notes taken by others, though many were reluctant to share their class notes with her. She could not afford to purchase the books either.

I was dejected and felt sorry for her. My mind was repentant for scolding her. It was evident from her pale and frail appearance that she did not even have two proper meals a day. I now appreciated her zeal for reappearing in the honours exams. I summoned her the next day to help her by providing some books and other available course materials. She agreed, but did not come.

After a week or so she came to me asking for books. Seeing my eagerness to know about the reason for her late appearance, she told me that her mother was sick. I gave her the books and told her to study hard as the exams were coming soon. It was then that I told her about Swami Vivekananda's '3 Hs' formula: head, heart, and hands. I believed that one can do anything if one follows Swamiji's message of using one's head, heart, and hands. In her present situation she had to grasp the subjects by using her head, concentrate by loving her work and studies with her heart, and increase her writing speed with her hands. 'If you follow this, you will surely succeed. These are not my words; this is a famous teaching of Swami Vivekananda. Not much time is left for exams, so please follow this "3 Hs" formula,' I concluded. I gave her some probable questions for the exams. She seemed to be happy and promised to study hard, as she felt the books would be a great source of help to her. I also gave her some money for her tiffin and bus fares. At first she was reluctant to take the money, but I insisted and requested her to take it as a token of friendship. She finally took it and went away. After a month the exams were over and the results out. I was happy to see that Razia had cleared the exams. She had achieved her dream of completing her graduation.

Years passed and I forgot all about her. And now she suddenly appeared before me as a BDO! What a satisfaction. Still dazed I asked her: 'Tell me your story. Why did you never meet me again?' She said: 'I am sorry, ma'am. I did not

give back your books as my younger sister needed them.' 'That does not matter. Tell me about your story.' 'Ma'am, you had given me the booster dose with Swami Vivekananda's "3 Hs" formula. After getting those books from you, I worked hard to increase my writing speed. I improved my concentration in studies and started to remember the studied subjects. It took some time and effort. Then I felt I could do it. I reappeared in the exams and knew that this time I would get through. I scored second class, which was good enough for me. I planned to appear in the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) exams. It was difficult to convince my father, but he agreed after some persuasion. We formed a group of three girls along with a boy from our neighbourhood to study together. Through our preparation we gradually felt confident, and the goal seemed to be within our reach. By that time all of us knew about Swamiji's "3 Hs" formula and everyone was trying their best to put it into practice.

'Three of us appeared in the JPSC exams, a real challenge in our lives. To our immense joy all of us got through. That was the happiest day of my life. I felt as if I had grown wings and I could fly. My father went to every house in the neighbourhood saying: "It is my daughter not son who has become an officer." Everybody congratulated me with sweets. A dream had come true for my whole family. After training I have been posted here in Kisko. And I liked this place very much.' I sighed after breathlessly listening to her story. 'But how did you know I had come here?' I asked. She explained: 'Nitin is a good friend of mine. I used to tell him about you and Swamiji's formula. He planned to bring you here so that we could meet again and give you a surprise.' Unable to control my tears, I embraced her, kissed her, and blessed her from the core of my heart. I took out a photograph of Swami Vivekananda and gave it to her, telling that Swamiji has done the miracle, not me.



'A Memorable Event', by Amit Kumar Sarkar

We both then sat down to take tea and talk about her present duties and her family. One of her younger sisters was doing postgraduate studies, while the elder brothers were helping their father with the farm. She helped them by providing information about the advanced techniques of farming with the help of the Internet. The younger ones were still studying. She had brought her parents to stay with her.

'What have you decided about your marriage?' was my next query. With her cheeks reddening, she told me: 'Madam, my fiancé is posted in Bhandra, a nearby block. We were studying together. His name is Farhan. We are planning to marry next year. He also believes in the "3 Hs" formula. We have a plan to extend a helping hand to the village girls who cannot go to school for various reasons and also to start a school for them.'

After listening to all these developments I mentally saluted Swami Vivekananda for his message to all of us. His eternal words will help many more generations to come. Meeting with Razia made my Kisko trip unforgettable.



# **Comprehensive Education in the Light of Swami Vivekananda**

**Rajeshri Trivedi**

**S**WAMI VIVEKANANDA, an educationalist par excellence, presented the concept of man-making education, which constitutes a comprehensive development of the human personality. Such education considers inculcation of social, ethical, and spiritual values as an absolute necessity for an all-round human development. Many people labour under the idea that education merely means going to school or college, whereas Swamiji has given a comprehensive ideal of an education that is essential for the present times.

Education is not mere book-learning, according to Swamiji, nor is it diverse knowledge. For him education is ‘the training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful.’<sup>1</sup> The dynamism that modern societies are to witness due to such education is not to be merely an external imposition of information but the flowing of positive energy from within.

## **Real Education**

The purpose of education is the upliftment of individuals and of society. Although Swamiji did not write a book on education, he contributed valuable thoughts that are relevant and viable today. His oft-quoted definition, on which hinge all his other thoughts on education, is: ‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man’ (4.358). This definition implies that perfection is inherent in everyone and needs to be manifested through

education. He says: ‘What a man “learns” is really what he “discovers”, by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge’ (1.28). This ‘manifestation’ takes place as a natural growth from inside out. As in the case of a plant that grows according to its nature but needs external help to make it healthy and strong, similarly education should serve as an external source of help for growth. All studies are just to awaken our soul, which, besides being a ‘mine of infinite knowledge’, is also a mine of infinite power. This power can be translated into developing the capacity and capability of becoming anything one wants. No power in the external world can stand for long as a bar to the internal world.

The mind, however, is the first bar and, according to Swamiji, it can be remoulded through proper efforts. In most cases the mind is untrained, fragmented, and restless. He said: ‘We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas’ (3.302). One must think good thoughts for ‘the bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and held in control in a corner of the mind’ (1.55). Next, every thought and action that is selfish weakens the mind and will not build up a good character. When thoughts and actions are unselfish the strength of the mind grows. Swamiji’s idea of education makes

one self-controlled, fearless, altruistic, and frees the mind from innumerable problems. Such a mind helps one easily meet the daily challenges of life. The core of education is concentration. Swamiji says: ‘To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be developed the power of concentration and detachment’ (6.38–9).

Every society has two aspects: internal and external. The internal is culture and the external civilization. Swamiji says: ‘It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge (3.291). Swamiji wanted a culture based on spirituality because at the core of everyone is the spiritual entity—the Atman. Such culture flows outwards and makes civilization spiritual. The student should also be possessed of *shraddha*, faith. This faith can work wonders for oneself and for others. Today’s education is very superficial and Swamiji had warned: ‘We are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow’ (2.15). Thus education should integrate the personality and cultivate every faculty a person is endowed with. One’s intellect should be cultured along with one’s emotional, active, and aesthetic side. Swamiji knew that a healthy mind resides in a healthy body and therefore encouraged us to exercise and be strong.

Swamiji was convinced that education alone would be able to solve most of the problems plaguing humankind, provided that education is given a spiritual orientation. Accordingly, the

educational system should be able to focus on the spiritual side of the human personality. Traditionally, Indian culture has always attempted to give a spiritual direction to human growth, consistent with the real dignity of humankind and its infinite potentialities. Today even the physical sciences have recognized that the criterion of evolution at the human stage is qualitative, namely, fulfilment and not mere numerical increase or survival. Wise people also realize that matter and its derivatives is not the goal of life. The Upanishads uphold that the search for fulfilment leads us progressively beyond our physical and sensate awareness, which is finite and limited. According to Swamiji, it is through spiritual growth that humans can achieve fulfilment, by realizing their true essence as the infinite Atman.

Swamiji’s idea of education leads to human excellence and not to the achievement of a mere academic career. An education with a spiritual orientation is important because the surplus human energy at the secular or sensate level falls back on the personality and creates emotional disturbances and inner tensions. This energy should be raised to reach higher levels of consciousness.

Therefore, a consolidated training for the youth has to encourage a responsible social behaviour with a sharp moral sense. This process need not be aligned to any particular class or culture but can be universal to include all levels of society. Education should foster humanism, which is a universal value, and through which it is possible to rise above all narrowness and achieve the status of a spiritually developed individual at the social level.

The process of education should help every person to assimilate the forces of science, technology, and democracy. That is, there ought to be an equilibrium between the intellectual

forces of science, the social forces of technology and democracy, and the force of spirituality. This balance between materialism and spirituality will bring great human advancement and welfare in different fields.

In the past the assimilation of the forces of science and democracy was problematic due to the revolutionary effect they had on societies. In most cultures religious consciousness is not hospitable to these forces. This has resulted in schism and conflict between science and religion, reason and faith, matter and spirit, humankind against the universe and each other. Such a situation can be precarious in today's world. Hence Swamiji gave us a comprehensive idea of education and development in order to harmonize all the material and spiritual forces. Ultimately, Swamiji showed that they are one, and education is to play this great role of bringing all conflicts and schisms to an end.

Social and moral values are integral to education. Ethical and moral values are actually spiritual values realized in a social context. Swamiji says that education does not consist of cramming information into the mind (3.302), but training the mind in the capacity to search for facts and information, organize it into knowledge by finding interrelationship and significance, and use that knowledge to enhance the quality of life. Hence education is like a science that helps in the systematic unfolding of the inherent capacities and powers of the mind.

### **Gradual Ascent towards the Goal**

The goal of human life is the attainment of *mukti*, spiritual freedom, which was generally reserved for ascetics and persons of high calibre. Swamiji observed that this high ideal left the majority mentally and spiritually ill-nourished and made the ideal irrelevant for them. The high spiritual inaction of *mukti* becomes, in

the lives of the unprepared, a caricature of laziness, inertia, and unconcern. It is important to first realize the lesser and more easily attainable ideals of life before climbing towards *mukti*, which many people fail to realize.

The requisites for social welfare and development are active ethics and not passive virtues of the other-worldly. The ordinary person, in a social environment, needs social ethics that would give importance to civic and social virtues and responsibilities. Thus, it is important to realize the more attainable ideals of character-building, work efficiency, spirit of cooperation, concern for the environment, and general social well-being. Swamiji had observed that though Western countries were running headlong towards pleasures, they had the virtues of good character, efficiency, and human concern. These are virtues that build up individuals with a strong moral sense and create a balanced society, ethically and economically.

Our social life should be a preparation to launch ourselves into spirituality. A person acting correctly develops socially, morally, and spiritually. Spiritual realization comes only to a person through the correct realization of social and moral values. Thus Swamiji's concept of education introduces a person to the ideas of inner growth and development, apart from the more obvious physical growth and development.

It is the human being that creates values while interacting with nature and society. Through these interactions humans learn to create new values or refine old ones. As humans are dynamic, so also are societies and values. Swamiji's concept of a comprehensive education aims at the physical, intellectual, and ethical integration of the individual into a complete whole. This in turn fosters the integration of individuals with the rest of humanity and its concerns and problems. Thus education

should not be school-centred or book-centred but individual-centred.

Education should aim to produce holistic virtues and graces that will create truly global citizens. Such individuals can cooperate and live harmoniously with fellow humans rather than colliding with them. This education should be accessible to all because it is universal. This concept of human excellence attempts to transform mere organic individuality into a conscious social participation.

The goal of education is to make a person universal. In Swamiji's view (5,382), an individual must be led towards the values of renunciation and service, through which he or she is able to become universal. In the present social context renunciation means the subjugation of the lower

self with a view of developing character. Service makes the heart broad; it is integral to citizenship. Service is a universal value. Just as the interconnectedness among nations helps in economic development, so also the interconnectedness of humanity at the psychological level helps in its spiritual advancement.

As we have seen, Swami Vivekananda's concept of a comprehensive education is a powerful agent in integrating the whole of humankind, which is the first step towards the development of truly spiritual societies.



(Continued from page 436)

### **Swamiji's Feelings**

How did these defections affect Swamiji? True, they did give him much pain, but having infinite faith in the possibilities of the human soul, his love for those who deserted him remained the same. Notwithstanding Sturdy's insolence, Swamiji brought the chain of his insulting letters to a close with the remark: 'That India still lives, Sturdy—[that] India of undying love. ... And I, the least of that India's child, love you, Sturdy, with *Indian* love, and would any day give up a thousand bodies to help you out of this delusion' (2.478). His all-embracing love was truly divine. Nothing could make him overreact. He wrote about Miss Müller to Christine Greenstidel: 'Did you hear about my friend Miss Müller? Well, she left me in India—and they say tried to injure me in England. ... Her defection was a great blow to me—as I loved her so much' (2.479). Convinced

of the greatness of the power working through him, Swamiji depended on no human help. He knew that it was by divine will that his message was amply broadcast. The disloyalty of some people could not stand against its progress. Despite such blows and disappointments, Swamiji's celestial radiance remained undimmed. Can a defect in the eye of the beholder diminish the brilliance of the sun?



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# **Significance of Shodashi Puja**

**Brahmachari Chandikachaitanya**

EVERY GREAT LIFE IS the elaboration of a noble ideal that nurtures many other lives and provides guidance for future generations. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on that central ideal while studying the lives of great people. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, the avatar of this age, one finds him undergoing different types of sadhana and experiencing high states of consciousness, which he then teaches in a simple way. All of Sri Ramakrishna's experiences lead him to a wonderful epoch-making incident: the worship of his consort Sri Sarada Devi as the Divine Mother and the surrendering of the fruit of his sadhana to her. Sri Ramakrishna performed Shodashi Puja, with Sri Sarada Devi as the living Shodashi, in his room at Dakshineswar on the night of the Phalaharini Kali Puja.

Shodashi refers to the Divine Mother in one of her ten forms of a beautiful immaculate sixteen-year-old girl. Many men still consider women to be merely objects of enjoyment and child-bearing-and-rearing machines. By worshipping and invoking the Devi in the living form of Sri Sarada Devi, Sri Ramakrishna gave a new meaning to the idea of womanhood and also awakened in the Holy Mother the idea of universal motherhood. The significance of this event is very important for today's women and men, as it strips away the idea of life as merely material and shows the underlying divine dimension of all human beings.

## **Women: Forms of Divinity**

From Vedic times in India, like in some other ancient world cultures, God is also conceived

as feminine and even worshipped in many goddesses. India not only retained her numerous primeval goddesses but added more to its pantheon over the years. This pervasive idea of numerous goddesses induced Indians to address women as manifestations of the Divine Feminine. However, during the centuries that followed, general religious practices were increasingly influenced by monasticism. Vedic rituals, in which the wife was indispensable, were slowly divested of their old importance. Women were now labelled as embodiments of maya, of bondage. Many saints and monks shunned women thinking them to be the greatest obstacle in spiritual life. Though in the Vedic age girls used to study along with boys, during the medieval ages girls were deprived of education at schools. They were to be educated at home by their fathers and brothers. With general education denied to them, women became economically dependent on others and lost their freedom in many aspects of social life. Swamiji says: "The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem"—says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women "despicable worms", "gateways to hell", and so forth. Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between heaven and hell!"<sup>1</sup>

Endowed with exceptional renunciation Sri Ramakrishna not only lived with his consort but elevated her on the altar of universal motherhood, thus making her one of his most powerful instruments for spreading his message. In worshipping the Holy Mother, Sri

Ramakrishna revived an ancient teaching of the *Chandi*: ‘*Vidyah samastastava devi bhedah striyah samastah sakala jagatsu*; O Devi, all types of knowledge are your aspects, all female forms in the universe are verily thy manifestation.’<sup>2</sup> All women are the reflections of the Divine Mother, who appears as daughter, wife, and mother in people’s life. But by far the mother form is the purest as well as the most beneficial in this world. In her current incarnation as Sri Sarada Devi, the Divine Mother exemplifies the highest ideal of motherhood. She declared: ‘My son, don’t you know that the Master used to see the Divine Mother in all beings? This time he has left me behind in order to teach the Motherhood of God to the world.’<sup>3</sup>

For twelve years Sri Ramakrishna underwent several spiritual practices and attained perfection in all of them, which was more of a lesson to the world than for his own benefit. It demonstrated how intensely one must yearn for God in order to see him. An avatara comes for the good of the world and so his sadhana is for the benefit of the world. By worshipping the Holy Mother at the culmination of all his sadhana, Sri Ramakrishna made available his spiritual treasures to the world by offering them to her. She is now the keeper of the spiritual treasures, and those who approach her as children receive those treasures that help in the path towards liberation. Sri Ramakrishna has re-established the honour of women and made them conscious of their divine aspect. From the moment Sri Ramakrishna surrendered everything to the Holy Mother the auspicious awakening of woman power began in the world.

### **The Worship**

It was a new moon night and the auspicious time of the Phalaharini Kali Puja,<sup>4</sup> when the Divine Mother pleased with the worship

becomes *phalaharini*, who devours the fruits of the karma that leads to future births. This puja was also being celebrated at the Dakshineswar temple. Sri Ramakrishna had privately arranged for the Shodashi Puja in his room. He had sent beforehand a message to the Holy Mother to be present at that time. After finishing the preliminary parts of the puja, Sri Ramakrishna asked the Holy Mother to take the seat meant for the Devi. He sprinkled sanctified water on her and uttered the mantras for invoking the Devi Shodashi thus: ‘O Divine Mother Tripurasundari! O Eternal Virgin, possessor of all power! Please open the gate of perfection. Purify her body and mind, and manifest Yourself through her for the welfare of all.’<sup>5</sup> Sri Ramakrishna then worshipped Shodashi in the Holy Mother with sixteen items, according to the rules of the puja. After offering food to the Devi he placed a little of that in the Holy Mother’s mouth, who was in deep samadhi! Sri Ramakrishna also went into samadhi, and thus the worshipper and the worshipped were united.

Some time passed in this way. It was long after midnight when the Master gradually regained partial consciousness of the world. In that semi-conscious state he offered himself to the Devi manifest in the person of Sarada, and then forever surrendered at her feet himself, the result of his sadhana and his rosary. He then bowed down to her with this prayer: ‘O consort of Shiva, the most auspicious of all auspicious beings! O Doer of all actions! O Refuge of all! O three-eyed goddess of golden complexion! O power of Narayana, I salute You again and again’ (*ibid.*).

A worship as this, in which a husband worships the Divine Mother in his wife, is uncommon in religious literature. Puja is generally performed in a *pratima*, image, and a *pratika*, symbol, like a *ghata*, pitcher, yantra, or a *pata*, picture. It takes a worshipper of a very high



'Sarada Ma', by Swami Tadatmananda

calibre to perform puja in a living being. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'If God can be worshipped through a clay image, then why not through a man?'<sup>6</sup> It is through this worship that Sri Ramakrishna introduced the Holy Mother to the world as the Divine Mother, who, as we see in her life, expressed her universal motherhood by reaching out to everything in creation.

### **Divine Relationship**

The human intellect has achieved much due to its desire to know the unknown. This intellect, unless purified by devotion to God and tapasya, can never fathom the divine relationship between Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. They looked like ordinary people, but the

many perfected saints who came to Dakshineswar saw them as avatars of God.

No action is possible for the formless Brahman unless it is aided by Shakti. That is why Sri Ramakrishna made his Shakti perform tasks for the spiritual welfare of the world. It would be imprudent to think that their powers are separate. They are one and the same. The Bhagavadgita says: 'Under me who am the Supervisor, Prakriti produces (the universe) with all the moving and the non-moving things.'<sup>7</sup> Sri Ramakrishna also says:

Names and forms are nothing but the manifestations of the power of Prakriti. Sita said to Hanuman: 'My child, in one form I am Sita, in another form I am Rama. In one form I am Indra, in another I am Indrani. In one form I am Brahma, in another, Brahmani. In one form

I am Rudra, in another, Rudrani.' Whatever names and forms you see are nothing but the manifestations of the power of Chitshakti. Everything is the power of Chitshakti—even meditation and the meditator. As long as I feel that I am meditating, I am within the jurisdiction of Prakriti.<sup>8</sup>

Again Sri Ramakrishna says: 'Whatever you perceive in the universe is the outcome of this union. Take the image of Siva and Kali. Kali stands on the bosom of Siva; Siva lies under Her feet like a corpse; Kali looks at Siva. All this denotes the union of Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is inactive; therefore Siva lies on the ground like a corpse. Prakriti performs all Her activities in conjunction with Purusha. Thus She creates,

preserves, and destroys' (271–2). This same entity came down as the conjoint powers of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

The aim of a jiva is to become Shiva. But that Shiva, according to the tantras, lies dormant in the *sahasrara*, thousand-petalled lotus chakra. Only if Shakti wishes can a jiva be awakened. But before this happens the seeker will have to cross through many layers of consciousness, starting from the *muladhara* chakra, where the kundalini Shakti dwells in a coiled form. Sri Ramakrishna used to sing: 'Awake, Mother! Awake! How long Thou hast been asleep / In the lotus of the Mula-dhara! / Fulfil Thy secret function, Mother: / Rise to the thousand-petalled lotus within the head, / Where mighty Siva has His dwelling; / Swiftly pierce the six lotuses / And take away my grief, O Essence of Consciousness!' (242). It is for this reason that Sri Ramakrishna established the Holy Mother in the world so that seekers can easily attain liberation through her grace.

Swamiji says:

You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of Mother's life—none of you. But gradually you will know. Without Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries?—because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the world.<sup>9</sup>

With all its violence and destruction, the world needs a new phase of peace and reconstruction. This will be possible when humanity can manifest its creative power, and at the centre of this power stands the Divine Mother.

While studying the life of the Holy Mother we find that she is still attracting the world through her motherly love—a love without discrimination. She projects herself as the mother of good

and bad people alike. A devotee once asked her: "I call you mother; but I want to know if you are my mother as a matter of fact." "If I am not your real mother" answered the Mother, "what else am I? I am really the mother."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, she declares herself as the mother of even lower creatures. A novice once asked her: "Are you the Mother of all?" "Yes," replied the Mother. "Even of these lower creatures?" pressed the inquirer. "Yes," answered the Mother' (363).

Sri Ramakrishna realized God as the Divine Mother in her various aspects, especially in Sri Sarada Devi. After he offered everything at her feet during the Shodashi Puja, he placed the Holy Mother as an ideal for this world. If we can surrender all our thoughts, words, and deeds to her, she, as *phalaharini*, will free us from all bonds and make us blissful.



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# Eternal Words

## Swami Adbhutananda

Compiled by Swami Siddhananda; translated by Swami Sarvadevananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

**I**F YOU COMPARE yourself with a person lying on the street, you will not feel pain, rather you will feel peace. As soon as you compare your own situation with that of a rich person, suffering will come to you. Give thanks to God that you are not suffering like the one lying on the street. You have at least a place to stand and some morsels of food to eat; you are not suffering much due to any particular need. One should pray to God when pain and suffering come. Moreover, one should see how many people are suffering more than you. If one can think in this way, one gets the power to endure one's suffering and obtain peace of mind.

How much I tortured my body during my youth by choosing to perform austerities! I didn't realize then what a great need there was to be in good health. Now I can see that if one's health is not good, how can one call upon God? Now I wish to call upon him more intensely, but either one disease or other is constantly going on in my body. What suffering I feel! What more can I say? As the vitality of the body wanes, all of these things hold me down.

Sadhus should stay in those places where there is some availability of *bhiksha*, alms, and water. As soon as one wakes up in the morning, one thinks, 'where shall I go for *bhiksha*?' How much time goes to beg for alms! For that reason Haridwar and Rishikesh are good places to perform austerities. Sadhus in large numbers stay in those places because there is the facility of obtaining food and water. The Master used to

say: 'The food collected by *bhiksha* from door to door is extremely pure.' They [people] cannot add much of their desires when they give only one piece of bread to a sadhu.

Once at Entally [in Calcutta] I asked a devotee who was very fond of me for some money. On arriving I saw that devotee drinking something. Thereafter he put three or four rupees in my hand. I took it at first. After a short time, returning the money into the devotee's hand I said: 'Let it be with you now.' When I returned other devotees asked me: 'Sir, why did you not accept that money?' Then I said: 'He gave money while he was drunk. Afterwards another mood may come; then it will be a degradation for both the giver and the receiver.' That is why I returned the money.

There is no happiness in this world. There is no happiness even after death. However much wealth, wife, children, honour, and fame one may amass, even then there is no happiness. There are happy people who have no suffering, who have only peace, like [the sages] Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanatkumara, and Shukadeva. They are ever young, ever childlike, beyond disease and bereavement and have no suffering at all. They are all the time in peace. All of the power of God is in them.

A small part of one's mind turns towards religion and one starts to grow one's hair long. My dear, if one grows one's hair long, will that make one religious? Religion means one will have to realize God in this very life. One does

not become religious only by saying: 'dharma! dharma!' One needs to do some karma; one needs to perform spiritual practices.

Parents will expect something if their son starts earning money. One should try to help one's parents as much as one can, even if they have enough means. If one does not help, one's parents become hurt. But if they ask you to marry and you have no desire to do so, you should not marry on the promptings of your parents. There is no harm in that. The parents themselves have experienced suffering by marrying, yet they want their son to experience suffering as well. This is worldliness!

If you stay together, it is natural that occasionally a few kind or unkind words will be exchanged. Even if it happens, must one keep all those things in one's mind all the time? When it happened, it happened. One should not harbour the memory of it in one's mind; one should drive it out. Many such incidents used to happen between us. We used to tell each other: 'Brother, don't keep it inside.' The Master would say: 'The anger of a sadhu is like a mark on water.'

Oh my dear, that country where there are no gods or goddesses or temples of gods is like a cremation ground! In happiness and in misery, in difficulties and in turmoil, you should always go to see the deity. It is very good to create these impressions. Seeing the deity during one's happy moments surely brings purity. One surely feels a little inspiration when one goes near the deity. At least at that time one feels extremely good; one does not remember anything of the family affairs. That is certainly a benefit.

In one moment you say something is good, the next moment you say it is bad. In a sense, you do not pay proper consideration before you speak. That is why this happens. One should only speak after analysis and after one's mind accepts the idea. Then there will be no confusion. Otherwise, one will ultimately suffer the consequences.

At Kashi many have established Shiva lingams, but many Shiva lingams do not get even a drop of water. This is a matter of great sorrow! It is certainly good to establish Shiva lingams. But at the same time, one should arrange for their regular worship and food offerings; then only will come some good result out of it.

The dog is more faithful than many people. If a wicked person enters the master's house, the dog will bite him. If it cannot do that, at least by barking at the person, the dog will awaken everyone. But the master's ungrateful servant says nothing.

One should not receive any instruction on any topic from a person who lacks knowledge of that subject. What will a ginger-vendor know about sheep?

From early childhood one should maintain purity. One should be restless for God. Otherwise, at a young age, falling prey to the bad whims of one's mind, a person comes to ruin. Is it an ordinary matter to be upright at that age? If a person can stay pure in his body, mind, and speech for thirty years, some spiritual experience will spontaneously arise.

What will come from being friends with someone whose mind is different from yours? If your respective goals become one, then only can you become compatible. One of you is always running around only with bad motives and the other is thinking about becoming a sadhu. For this reason you are not getting along. One is always blaming the other. There will be no problem if each holds to his own ideal.

My dear, can a person be an untouchable? It is only karma that makes one an untouchable.

It is undoubtedly nice to serve society. However, God realization is not possible by such means. To realize God one should come out of worldly life without a single possession. You ask, 'Can one not attain God through selfless work?' No. The mind may be purified, but to realize

God one will have to come out of the world without a single possession.

Do you know what *madhukari* is? A bee sits on each flower. It collects and eats nectar little by little. Similarly by begging from house to house a sadhu collects, morsel by morsel, the food he will eat afterwards. People give alms to sadhus with diverse desires. Whatever quantity they give, that much desire they will add to it. For this reason a sadhu does not take more than one morsel from each house. This small desire does not harm one's devotional and spiritual practices. If one collects a smaller amount of alms, then the quantity of their desires is also reduced. At the same time, one can remain free. For this reason the Master inspired us to perform *madhukari*. *Madhukari* is

very good; it is congenial for sadhana. The Master was very fond of food collected by *madhukari*.

Sri Ramachandra did not perform any animal sacrifice. If you listen to his instructions, it will surely bring you good. At the time of worship you should pray to Sri Ramachandra and Mother Durga with folded palms and tell them of your sufferings. Mother of course knows everything. You should say no to animal sacrifices. If people listen to you, it is good; if not, what can you do? They will cause their own suffering. What is that to you? Sri Ramachandra's worship was sattvic. Offering animal sacrifice and the like are all rajasic behaviours and attitudes.

There is no greater enemy than one who stands as an obstacle in one's way to God and the path of dharma.

Don't find fault with heroic persons. It is wrong to find fault with valorous persons because, who can say in which attitude they are performing their work?

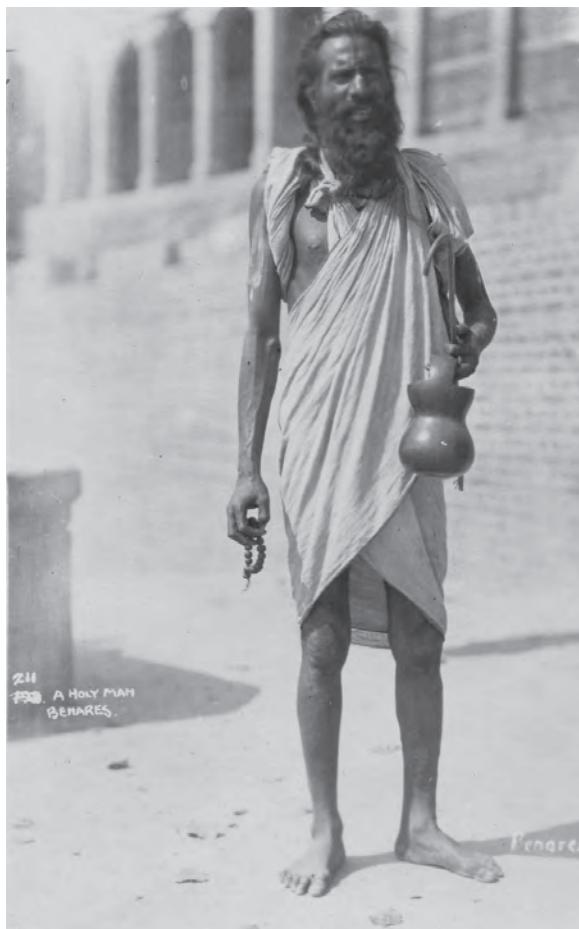
It is the result of much austerity if, at the time of giving up one's body, one can take the name of God. That person is surely virtuous.

Jesus Christ said that the wrongdoers cannot reach God, but those who are sinless and pure can reach him. God reveals himself to them.

Do you know the benefit of giving in charity? It helps in meditation and japa—the mind of the giver will remain open, cheerful, and pure. Such a mental state is very favourable for japa and meditation. The fruits of the actions of previous lives are counteracted. Only one who has money will perform charity; one who has none, will repeat the name of God and call upon him to remove one's suffering. This will help purify the mind.

Going through suffering himself, Sri Ramachandra demonstrated that even God [as an avatara] has to undergo suffering if he takes a human body. What to speak of ordinary people! What

*A sadhu at Varanasi in the late 1920s*



does it matter to God whether his kingdom remains or goes? Dasharatha made Sri Rama king. Yet, when he sent him to the forest, Sri Rama gladly left for the forest.

If you are honest and pure, God will surely help you—what to speak of help from a human being! Sri Krishna himself stayed with Arjuna as his charioteer during the war. Arjuna got frightened and said: ‘Friend, what will happen?’ Bhagavan replied: ‘*Yato dharmastato jayah*; where there is dharma, there is victory.’ Sri Krishna could have said, ‘Friend, I am there, what is there to fear?’ But he did not say that.

One should not eat items offered by a dishonest person; one’s understanding will become dishonest. The food of an honest person is pure. By partaking of such food one’s mind becomes pure.

One’s mind becomes cheerful seeing a pure soul who has done meritorious acts. On the other hand, one’s heart trembles seeing a sinful person.

Everybody is verily God’s child. But surely one is a good child who shows devotion to God and takes refuge in him.

Is God your bond slave that he will move according to your dictates? God is self-willed. Everyone must move according to his will.

If one associates with the unholy, unholy understanding will overpower one. Holy understanding develops when one associates with the holy. As is the company you keep, so will be the result you obtain.

One suffers and dies on account of one’s desires. Desire grows continuously. There is no hope for genuine happiness unless one’s desires go away.

There is no happiness for anyone in this world. One who has money has worries also [for fear of thieves and others]. One who has no money also suffers [on account of poverty]. Verily, one alone is happy who has realized God.

One should always live with God. One should not be envious of anybody. Envy alone creates all types of obstacles. Envious people only suffer.

One who has no possessions in this world, who except God will one call upon? One alone is praiseworthy who calls upon God though one has everything.

Do one’s bad habits go away only by having holy association? One must do spiritual practices. There is a proverb that a friendship developed between a swan and a crow. The crow invited the swan over and then the swan invited the crow. The swan fed the crow delicious items, whereas the crow offered the swan garbage. The meaning of the proverb is this: although the crow associated with the swan, the crow’s inherent nature remained unchanged.

As per the instructions of your guru, you are now calling upon God with that very name you have received during the time of initiation. But if you wish to think of God in ten other forms, remember that ‘your Chosen Ideal is playing through all these forms’. One can call upon God with the help of the name and form only; there is no loss or gain in whichever way you call on him. In this, again, whom are you rejecting? If you call upon one, you call upon everyone. If you take the name of one, that itself is equal to taking the name of everyone. Again, even if you call upon God superimposing diverse names and forms, you are really calling upon your Chosen Ideal only. That will not bring any restlessness or feeling of separation. But if diverse forms appear, what does it matter if everybody is there within that One? Those are mere doubts. It is a bit difficult to remove them until one has the direct experience of the Atman. It is a mistake to have such doubts. God is surely everything.

Everyone can give instruction regarding dharma, but it is very difficult to practise dharma. It does not happen without the grace of God.

It is very much necessary to read the scriptures. Then only one's understanding gets refined. Unless one's understanding is refined, discernment does not arise. By what tools will one discern the real from the unreal?

Whether one is a householder or a sadhu, God is displeased with one who does no karma—spiritual practices. There are two types of karma: inner and outer. One must do either one or the other of these types of karma. How will you understand God without doing karma?

In this Kali Yuga the focus of people's minds is on food. One needs food and clothing. Surely one should make an effort to obtain them; at the same time, one should give one's mind to God. The Master used to say this.

What a huge uproar occurred centring around brother Vivekananda! He only preached the name of the Master. He used to say, there is no other way except the Master; the Master is truly the fountain of all types of progress. One will be at a loss if one does not listen to brother Vivekananda's instructions.

For those who want to realize Sri Ramachandra, they should take refuge in Hanuman; then, by his grace, they will quickly reach Ramachandra. God is bound by the devotee. If one takes refuge in a devotee, one can realize the grace of God and attain him. God becomes pleased if one shows respect to his devotee. For this reason in order to know Sri Krishna one should take refuge in Arjuna. Moreover, if one wants to know Sri Ramakrishna, one has to take refuge in Swamiji. When one takes refuge in him, one comes to know the Master. Among us it is Swamiji alone who first understood the Master. Later, by the grace of Swamiji, we have understood the Master a little.

Shall we ever have a brother disciple like Swamiji? How many people are giving lectures and writing books. What good does that bring

to humankind? Whatever Swamiji has written, he wrote after experiencing it. That indeed is why his writings will remain new forever. By reading them, so many people will obtain peace now and in the future! The truth of the matter is that realization is necessary. Without that, no other means can bring anything; whether you give lectures or even if you write books!

One has to undergo great suffering as soon as one takes a body; no one understands this. Everyone without exception is restless for happiness, but they do not know how to attain happiness. Suffering is in the mother's womb, suffering is in birth, suffering is in life, suffering is also in death—where is happiness here? Everyone is mad only after happiness. Happiness is in the realization of God alone. Those who have seen God are verily happy; they alone have fulfilled the purpose of taking a human birth. They have so much suffering, yet they experience it only as happiness. If that is not one's experience, taking a body is pointless and life is merely suffering.

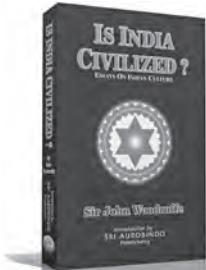
The Master used to say: '*Tairi khana mat chhoro*; do not give up cooked food.' If you give up cooked food, it brings no benefit and perhaps you will not get anything to eat that day. Whatever may be the type of food, not paying attention to whether it is good or bad, eat with peace. If you eat with such satisfaction, your body will remain healthy. Moreover, your mind will become pure. Whatever food you take, eat it after offering it to your Chosen Ideal. If it contains any defect, that defect is removed once it is offered to your Chosen Ideal.

One should not listen to any criticisms of one's guru; that will bring harm. If you have the power to do so, give them a very good lesson; there is no sin in that. If you have no such strength, in that case, you should leave that place.

*(To be continued)*

# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



## **Is India Civilized?** *Essays on Indian Culture*

Sir John Woodroffe

Standard Book Agency, 9 Anthony  
Bagan Lane, Kolkata 700 009. 2012.  
228 pp. ₹ 280.

When William Archer published *India and the Future* the common reader was duly impressed. It was an Alfred A Knopf publication and the year was 1918. Vilification of India's culture by myopic travellers and self-proclaimed academics was nothing new, but this work was by a popular journalist and translator of Ibsen. One had to take him seriously. Probably the British too seriously took his views about India being semi-barbaric.

Before long, on 13 April 1919, more than one thousand peaceful protesters and Baisakhi pilgrims were mown down at Amritsar's Jallianwallah Bagh by the British army under the command of General Dyer. Dyer was never repentant of his act because his view of Indians was coloured by the likes of Archer, so even in 1921 he would write: 'It is only to an enlightened people that free speech and a free press can be extended. The Indian people want no such enlightenment.' This is the point made by Archer in his book. India is a benighted land. Puffed up pride is splashed across the very first sentence of his book: 'The Viceroy of India rules over three hundred and fifteen million people, or in other words, about one-fifth of the human race.' It is hard to keep one's blood pressure under control while reading it, for when I received Woodroffe's book for review, I took up Archer again.

What astonished Sir John Woodroffe was the apathy of the Indians in accepting such strictures and by just turning away. Archer made fun of just about everything Indian, including the caste-mark, which gave the people 'a strange air of savagery combined with fanaticism'. He found

the jewellery worn by the women as 'a repellent manifestation of a perverted sense of beauty'. More and more of such scurrilous abuse, but Indians did not show anger! When he goes on to the art, architecture, and the rest of Indian heritage, well, Archer's pen proves to be no scripture, and 'barbarism' is a word that gets repeated with monotonous regularity throughout the book. Of course, Swami Vivekananda also comes under Archer's fire: 'That India which proposes to send forth its Swamis to spiritualize the Western world, the world of Berkeley and Kant, of Bergson and William James!' Archer was so ignorant that he did not know William James had quoted Swami Vivekananda at length in his classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*!

Such outrageous writing in the guise of a 'Rationalist's view' prompted Sir John Woodroffe to come up with a rebuttal. Woodroffe was a lawyer, Tagore Law Professor at the Calcutta University, and a much respected High Court judge. He was also a Sanskrit scholar and had specialized in tantric lore. He was aghast and answered Archer point by point. Not that Woodroffe was turning a Nelson's eye to the weaknesses that had crept into India's received tradition. He was also aware of some of the Western educated Indians who were so ignorant that they had no idea of their great culture and who argued that the teaching of even Indian philosophy requires an English education!

Every point made by Woodroffe is pure common sense. He says that though Indian civilization has been under cultural attack since times immemorial, it has survived, enriching itself even in bad times. Woodroffe quotes from great scholars like Sir William Jones, Victor Cousin, and Friedrich Schlegel, which is balm to our wounded soul. And then he writes that this culture is no dead memory like the Phoenician or Babylonian civilizations: 'India lives. Up to now India has presented itself as one of the "immortal" peoples, to use the word

of (I think) some French writer whose name I forget. Suffering racial and social division, politically disrupted, with a great variety of languages and scripts, governed for centuries by strangers, She has yet held together so that we can still speak of "India" (138).

Page after page Woodroffe comes up with details to defend Indian culture, how the nation has drawn strength from certain religious concepts, and how its varied philosophies are actually a mark of strong intellectual power. The monumental ignorance of Archer, who said Indian art and sculpture are demoniac monstrosities and the paintings of Ajanta are not artistic, are laughable, says Woodroffe, and gives an excellent defence in his chapters 'A Reply', 'Bharata Dharma', and 'Brahmanism'.

Woodroffe repeatedly asks Indians themselves to stand up for their great civilization by living it and countering the false propaganda of the West. He did not have to wait for long. Sri Aurobindo began a review of *Is India Civilized?* in *Arya* in December 1918. The review blossomed into the classic *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. Commending Woodroffe for his defence that actually 'raised with great point and power the whole question of the survival of Indian civilisation and the inevitability of a war of cultures' (13). Sri Aurobindo proceeded to give a clear, readable history of Indian culture in English. Indian culture has a turn to the spiritual without denying the world. Else, ancient Indians would not have touched the high spires of science and technology. But Archer's attack to decry it has a political motive. The burden of his inveighing against India is that she should follow the canons of a so-called rationalistic and materialistic European civilization. If allowed to succeed, this rationalistic transformation would spell doom for the genius of India, which was moving towards higher achievements in the material and the spiritual realms. The present edition of *Is India Civilized?* carries Sri Aurobindo's comprehensive introduction to *The Foundations of Indian Culture* and makes it doubly welcome.

The writings of Woodroffe and Sri Aurobindo have not been in vain. By and large the Indian does not speak disparagingly of his mother culture any more. With so much awareness that has

been created, this century is sure to make India 'the spiritual guru of the world'.

*Prema Nandakumar*  
Researcher and Literary Critic,  
Srirangam



### **Mandala: The Art of Creating Future**

June-Elleni Laine

New Age Books, A-44, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi 110 028. Website: [www.newagebooksindia.com](http://www.newagebooksindia.com). 2013. viii + 102 pp. ₹ 200.

Following the principles of the mandala, this book of pragmatic value provides a success formula to overcome the hurdles and achieve the fulfilment of our desires and aims. The subtitle 'The Art of Creating Future' says it all by showing the mandala as an unfailing tool of crafting our future. The author's definition of mandala as the 'container of essence' is significant. Mandala broadly refers to any device, diagrammatic or environmental, that generates powerful doses of energy—the needed 'essence'—in us to realize our intentions and aims.

After a brief introduction, the first chapter chiefly describes the mandala in its pictorial and sculptural aspects. Different traditions of the mandala such as Tibetan, Taoist, and Tantric and the concept of creating the mandala are dealt with. The author states that the mandalas are physical tools that help improve our understanding by allowing us to affect our reality.

The second chapter, 'Right-Brain Divinity', deals with the right hemisphere of our brain as a trigger of intuitive thought and its propensities for divinity and integrality, while the left hemisphere is taken as a generator of logical thought, individualism, and separation. A case is made for striking a right balance between rational logic and intuition in the pervasive context of the dominance of the left brain. Greater use of the right brain, with its potential for divinity, creativity, and omniscience, is insisted upon. Various ways of interacting with the mandalas are discussed.

In the third chapter, 'Experience the Mystery', an incessant mental and visual focus on the mandala is recommended. Mandala, a marvellous

'vehicle to connect to source', has four phases, with five qualities involved in it, and six forms. This subject is discussed in detail. The need for honing our skills in the creation of a mandala is underscored to ensure the manifestation of more subtle energies in us.

The fourth chapter, 'How to Make Your Own Mandalas', comes to grips with the intricacies of the production of a mandala. The five types of producing a mandala, the paraphernalia required, and the methodology are set forth.

The fifth chapter, 'Mandala and You—Co-creation', strongly stresses the imperative of interaction with the mandala after its creation. The rule of 'one mandala at a time' is laid down. A rambling mind defeats the purpose of the mandala, while a focused mind promotes it. The personal experiences of different users of mandalas are narrated in graphic detail to show how the mandalas can be harnessed to such varied purposes like the curing of dog-phobia, the quick clinching of a property deal, or the healing of serious ailments.

While the sixth chapter, 'Meet Me in the Field', shows how the mandalas can work on the three levels of our awareness—conscious, subconscious, and unconscious—and how our reactions at different levels impact the range of our awareness, the seventh chapter, 'Artist? Scientist? Shaman?', maintains that the art aspect of the mandalas is one of the most accessible and universal tools for co-creation, especially in this age.

The eighth chapter, 'I Am That, I Am ... a Mandala', the startling remark is made that each of us is a multi-sensory mandala. 'Understanding that we are a spirit within the body—the container of our essence' (77) is of primary importance. We are, in a way, not only receptacles of vibrant energy but radiators of energy as well. The chapter even deals with seemingly random and chaotic things that, if taken care of, would contribute to the accentuation of our energy. Aspects of our mandala—such as our appearance, our voice, our speaking in positive terms, our food, our body odour, our mental temper, our postures in different situations, the way we maintain our homes, the attention we pay to colours and decor, and a host of other apparently minor things—are shown to be energy multipliers.

While 'Appendix I' contains references for further reading, 'Appendix II' disclose feedbacks from experiments instigated by the author using the mandalas she created. There is a concluding section, titled 'Notes', that clarifies necessary ideas arranged chapter-wise.

This paperback book presents relatively novel ideas in charming vividness.

N Hariharan  
Madurai

### **Reviewing Hindutva: A Historic Perspective in the Light of Vivekananda**

Manoj Shankar Naik



Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust, No 5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai 600 005. Website: [prakashan.vivekanandakendra.org](http://prakashan.vivekanandakendra.org). 192 pp. ₹ 100.

The book has been divided into two sections comprising the pre-Hindutva and the post-Hindutva periods. There is an introductory chapter at the beginning titled 'Why this Book?', which lays stress on the need to recognize the sacrifice done by the martyrs to save India, especially Hinduism, from being wiped out by foreign conquerors. It justifies the use of the word 'Hindutva' in the Indian context, supported by eminent Indian and foreign writers. To many the word 'Hindutva' is unpalatable, but the Supreme Court of India in its judgement says: 'It is a fallacy and an error ... to proceed on the assumption that Hindutva ... per se depicts an attitude hostile to ... any religion other than the Hindu religion. ... Hindutva is not to be equated with or understood as Hindu fundamentalism.'

The first section has been divided into six chapters. In chapter one, 'India—A Legacy of Spiritual Oneness', begins with a quote from the speech given by Swami Vivekananda at the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11 September 1893. The intention of this quote is to bring home India's rich heritage and legacy, which has its timeless appeal and relevance.

The next chapter, 'Social Inequality in India', brings to the fore the sad plight of untouchability in India, which led to the downfall of Hinduism and the attempt to conversion by Christian

missionaries. The chapter also quotes Swami Vivekananda, who declared that the scriptures do not bar the Vedas from being read by women and shudras and attributed such injunctions as interpolations by later-day brahmanas to exercise their priestly hold.

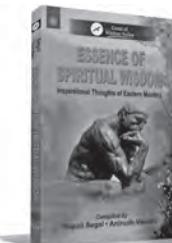
The third chapter, 'Seeds of Separatism', points out very well how even prior to Veer Savarkar's birth the seeds of separatism were being sown by dissidents. It shows how the so-called secular historians distorted facts and portrayed national leaders in a poor light, while making them look fully responsible for the partition of Bharata into India and Pakistan.

The following chapter, 'Denial, Deceptions and Distortions', quotes extensively Swami Vivekananda's views on the sufferings of the people at the hands of foreign occupants. The chapter quotes Mahatma Gandhi's view on this topic and also provides facts of the damage perpetrated to the people through centuries of foreign rule.

The next section, 'Post-Hindutva Period', has six chapters too. The first four chapters—'Hindutva Unveiled', 'The Two Nation Theory', 'What Led to Partition?', and 'Hindutva—Myths & Facts'—bring to the fore the generosity of the Indians in accommodating the wishes of other communities, which was not always properly reciprocated. The chapter cites Veer Savarkar and his works to prove that for him nationality was superior to his love for his religion. His thoughts are presented along with comments of eminent historians regarding the injustice done to Indian ethos.

Santosh Kumar Sharma  
Kharagpur, West Bengal

## BOOKS RECEIVED

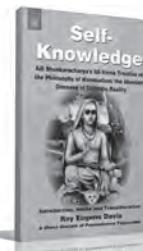


### ***Essence of Spiritual Wisdom: Inspirational Thoughts of Eastern Masters***

Comp. Rupali Segal and  
Anirudh Vasdev

New Age Books. 2013. x + 157 pp. ₹ 250.

This collection of quotations is arranged thematically and represents a broad spectrum of the spiritual traditions of the East.



### ***Self-Knowledge: Adi Shankaracharya's 68-Verse Treatise on the Philosophy of Nondualism***

Trans. Roy Eugene Davis

New Age Books. 2012. 76 pp. ₹ 125.

The translator, a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, has written an elaborate introduction with notes and commentary on this important primer on Advaita Vedanta.



### ***So You Shall Know the Truth: A Collection of Discourses***

Svāmi Pūrnā

New Age Books. 2013. ix + 182 pp. ₹ 275.

The erudite and enlightened author explains the profound spiritual truths found in the Indian scriptures through stories and illustrations.

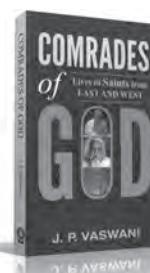


### ***The Main Ceremonies of the Khasi***

K S Marbaniang, Sitimon  
Sawian, and Wallamphang Roy,  
Trans. Bijoya Sawian

Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, Riverside, Uzanbazar, M G Road, Guwahati 781 001. 2012. Website: [www.vkic.org](http://www.vkic.org). xiv + 45 pp. ₹ 100.

The book shows the simplicity, elegance, and depth of the Khasi social and philosophical outlook. The Khasi way of life establishes a connection between the individual, society, and nature.



### ***Comrades of God: Lives of Saints from East and West***

J P Vaswani

Gita Publishing House, 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Pune 411 001. Website: [www.dadavaswanisbooks.org](http://www.dadavaswanisbooks.org). 2013. 275 pp. ₹ 300.

In this highly inspirational book J P Vaswani gives us brief and beautiful pen pictures of twenty saints from many faiths, races, and ages.

# REPORTS

## **Commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda**

The following centres held various programmes to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. **Delhi:** 4 three-day workshops from 1 to 15 May 2014, in which 318 teachers were trained for conducting value education programmes in schools. **Japan:** On 25 May the centre held the concluding function of Swamiji's 150th birth anniversary celebration, comprising speeches and cultural programmes, which was attended by about 400 people. Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, the ambassadors of India and Nepal to Japan, and some other distinguished speakers including Christian and Buddhist priests addressed the gathering. A few books related to Swamiji and a special issue of the centre's bimonthly magazine were also released. **Kochi:** A four-day workshop on 'The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda' from 1 to 4 May, in which 40 youths took part. **Rajkot:** Gujarat Ratha Yatra organized by the centre was launched on 11 May. It is scheduled to cover nearly 250 talukas of 28 districts in Gujarat. **Ranchi Morabadi:** A seminar on 'Agriculture: The Gateway to Prosperity' was held on 4 May, in which about 200 delegates comprising scientists, university professors, government officials, farmers, and others took part. **Swamiji's Ancestral House, Kolkata:** 2 youth conventions, one at Sundarbans area on 25 April and the other in Kolkata on 3 May; in all, 700 youths took part. A cultural



*Seminar on 'Unity in Diversity' at Thrissur*

programme on 6 May, attended by nearly 650 people. On the centre's initiative a devotees' convention and 3 public meetings were held at different places in and around Kolkata from 27 April to 11 May; in all, about 1,400 people attended the programmes. **Thrissur:** A two-day state-level seminar on 'Unity in Diversity' on 14 and 15 May, attended by about 400 people.

## **Foundation Day**

The 118th Foundation Day of the Ramakrishna Mission was celebrated at Belur Math on 1 May. Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, chaired the meeting and the Swami Suhitananda delivered the welcome address. Srimat Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, and a few others addressed the gathering.

## **News from Branch Centres**

For the first time in its history, **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Guwahati**, launched a quarterly journal in Assamese language, titled *Vivek Bhaskar*. It was released by Swami Shivamayana-nanda, Trustee, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 1 May.

On the initiative of **Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo (Sri Lanka)**, a 3½-foot bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda was unveiled on 1 May at Sri Ponmambala Vaneshwarar temple in Colombo, which had been visited by Swamiji in 1897.

A 35-bed paediatric ward, staff quarters, and a medical store at the **Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Itanagar**, were inaugurated on 14 May.

The following centres conducted summer camps for students, which included chanting, bhajans, yogasanas, value education programmes, and other activities. **Aurangabad**: 6 days (22 to 27 April), 145 children; **Delhi**: 15 days (16 to 30 May), 57 children; **Kadapa**: 7 days (29 April to 5 May), 220 students and 7-day residential camp (19 to 25 May), 265 students.

### **Relief**

**Drought Relief** · Khetri centre distributed 40,000 l of drinking water from 24 to 28 May among 400 families facing acute water scarcity.

**Flood Relief** · Kankhal centre distributed 122,732 kg rice, 5,000 kg dalia (broken wheat grains), 54,320 kg flour, 45,472 kg dal, 5,128 kg sugar, 220 kg chira, 400 kg gur (molasses), 10,000 kg potatoes, 4,008 l edible oil, 49 kg turmeric powder, 49 kg chilli powder, 11,831 kg salt, 4,080 packets of biscuits, 1,060 kg puffed rice, 4,457 kg milk powder, 3,124 kg tea powder, 5,044 candles, 21,300 matchboxes, 217,000 halogen tablets, 3,340 dhotis, 1,840 saris, 1,575 sets of shirts and pants, 1,000 skivvies (high-necked long-sleeved garments), 7,795 sweaters, 10,958 school uniforms, 17,838 assorted garments, 4,425 chaddars, 13,400 metres of cloth, 9,990 blankets, 428 quilts, 4,000 pressure cookers, griddles, cooking pots, 126 sets of utensils (each set containing 3 cooking vessels, a plate, 2 bowls, a tumbler, and a kettle), 765 buckets, 576 mugs, 1,670 dictionaries, assorted agricultural

#### *Flood relief by Kankhal centre*



equipment, 2,500 torches, 3,504 solar lanterns, 4,500 umbrellas, and 500 trunks among 5,714 families of 47 villages and 9,259 students of 195 schools in Guptakashi and Agastyamuni areas from 1 March to 22 April. **Dehradun** centre distributed 100 shawls, 2,000 jackets, and 100 books among the affected families on 30 and 31 March.

**Fire Relief** · **Odisha**: From 30 April to 8 May, **Bhubaneshwar** centre distributed 1,200 kg rice, 600 kg dal, 226 kg salt, 113 kg edible oil, 250 kg sugar, 226 saris, 226 lungis, 226 towels, 113 stoves, 113 torches, and 113 utensil sets (each set containing 2 cooking vessels, a cooking pot, a water-pot, 2 buckets, 2 plates, 4 bowls, 2 mugs, 2 tumblers, a jug, a vegetable cutter, and other items) among 113 families whose houses had been gutted in a fire at Banki town. **Puri Mission** centre distributed 50 kg chira, 5 kg sugar, 40 packets of biscuits, 20 saris, 17 lungis, 6 pairs of garments, 22 towels, 10 bed sheets, 10 mosquito nets, 10 mats, 10 tarpaulin sheets, 8 sets of study materials, and 10 sets of utensils (each set containing a bucket, 2 cooking vessels, a ladle, a plate, a bowl, a tumbler, and a spoon) from 28 April to 3 May among 10 families whose houses were gutted in a fire at Brahmagiri block of Puri town.

**Distress Relief** · The following centres distributed various items to needy people. **Cherrapunji**: 50 saris on 14 February; **Vrindaban**: 900 kg rice, 900 kg flour, 225 kg dal, 225 kg mustard oil, 450 kg salt, 112 kg sugar, and 450 bars of soap among 450 old widows on 2 May. **Dinajpur**: 200 notebooks, 200 pens, and 206 sets of utensils (each set containing a plate, a tumbler and a bowl).

**Winter Relief** · **Cherrapunji** centre distributed 403 blankets from 10 to 25 December 2013 and 327 blankets from January to March 2014 to needy people.

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**Correction** · May 2014, p. 324: read 'published Odiya texts and Manipuri sankirtanas respectively' instead of 'and then published in Odiya texts and Manipuri sankirtanas respectively'; also read '*brahmavadinyah*' instead of '*brahmavadinah*'.

# LET'S HAVE A RETREAT



The message of Sri Ramakrishna was brought to Kerala by Swami Vivekananda himself when he visited this part of the country in 1892 during his Bharat Parikrama. He was in Thiruvananthapuram for 9 days before proceeding to Kanyakumari on 22 December. Although he made a group of friends, admirers, and followers there, some of whom kept track of his later successful endeavours but it was only in 1916 that the beginning for an official branch of the Ramakrishna Math was made when Revered Brahmanandaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the first president of Ramakrishna Math & Mission laid the foundation stone for the Sri Ramakrishna's shrine at Nettayam, Thiruvananthapuram. The 99 years old Ashrama with its beautiful serene background has been sanctified by the visits and stay of many saints of the order including direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda.

There are no permanent structures other than the temple itself built for the stay of sadhus so far. All the sadhus, especially elderly swamis have been put up with great difficulty all these years due to lack of even basic facilities and it was decided to construct a Sadhu Niwas along with a kitchen and common dining hall for devotees and visitors as well. The estimate for the proposed two-storeyed structure is just above ₹ 1,00,000,00 (Rupees one crore) and the work will be begun in the middle of June and finished within 12 months. We earnestly appeal to the devotees and well wishers of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda to contribute for this noble project and receive Their blessings. All donations are exempt from Income Tax rule under 80G.

Your contribution may be sent to the above address or remitted directly to any of the following bank accounts of "Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama":

Account No: 3054 9599 482 State Bank of India Jawaharnagar branch IFSC SBINB0004685 or  
Account No: 08211 0100 7063 Canara Bank Sasthamangalam branch IFSC CNRB0000821 or  
Account No: 4018 2200 001 039 Syndicate Bank Sasthamangalam branch IFSC SYNB0004018

Yours in the service of the Lord,  
Swami Mokshavratananda  
Adhyaksha



SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA CHARITABLE HOSPITAL  
(A Branch Centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math, West Bengal)  
Sasthamangalam, Thiruvananthapuram-695010  
Phone: 0471-2722125, 2722453, 2727607, 2726603, 2727393  
Mob: 8289916882, 9895723607 • Fax: 0471-2313502  
E-mail: srkachtv@gmail.com • Website: www.srkachospital.org

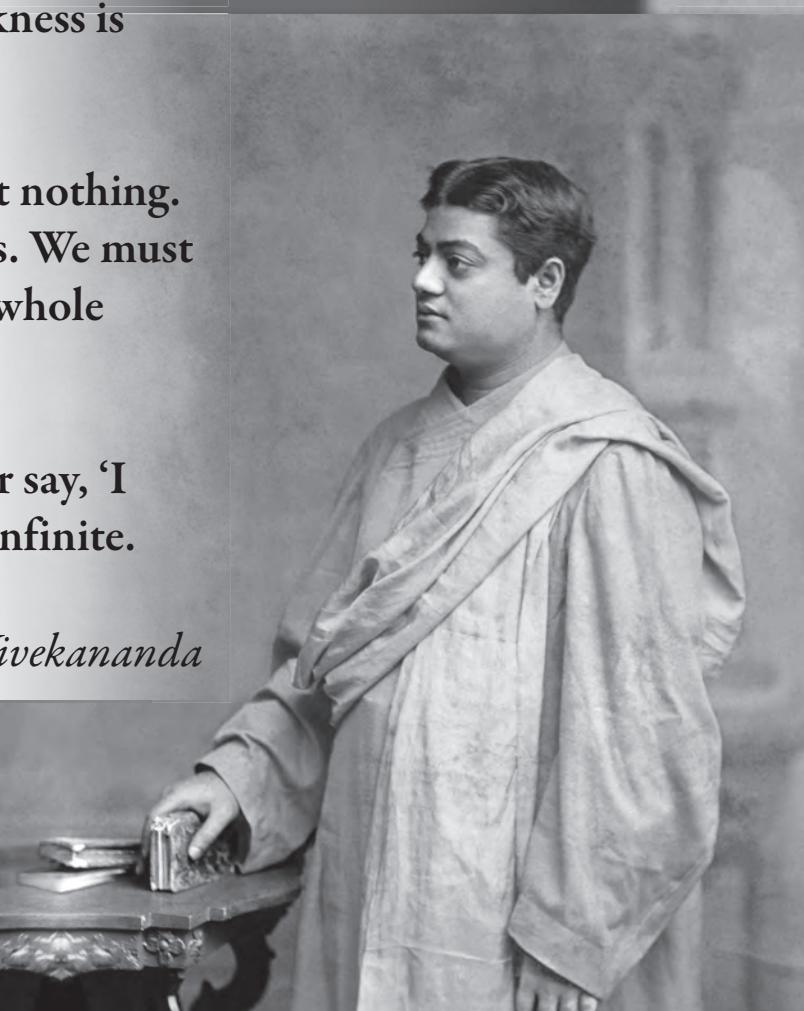
Each soul is potentially divine.  
The goal is to manifest this  
Divinity within.

Strength is life, weakness is  
death.

Fear nothing, stop at nothing.  
You will be like lions. We must  
rouse India and the whole  
world.

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I  
cannot', for you are infinite.

—Swami Vivekananda



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'FUTTEH BILLASS', the residential palace of the erstwhile Raja of Khetri, is sanctified with the stay of Swami Vivekananda himself. Swamiji had spent considerable time within these grand old walls during his three visits to the kingdom of Khetri. It was from here, buoyed by the encouragement of his beloved disciple Raja Ajit Singh Bahadur, that he truly launched forth his missionary life. The palace building was handed over to the Ramakrishna Mission by the last Raja of Khetri State in 1959. Since then the Ramakrishna Mission, Khetri has taken up the ardent task of preserving the memory of the great Swami by involving itself in various spiritual, cultural, as well as service activities in and around Khetri.

However, the condition of this historic building is deteriorating with age. 150 long years of wind, rain and heat are slowly taking its toll of the grand structure. The time has come when serious attention must be given to restoring the former glory to this 'Temple to the memory of Swami Vivekananda'. As a tribute to Swamiji on the occasion of his 150th Birth Anniversary, we have



decided to take up the renovation process of this historic edifice, which holds witness to a unique monk-king relationship. We have also decided to set up an attractive Museum, elucidating this almost-forgotten chapter in history.

We feel happy to inform you that the restoration work of the historic 'Futteh Billass' palace has been started by us from the 10th of July, 2011. The total expenditure towards this ambitious project comes to the tune of Rupees Six Crores, of which we are receiving Rupees Four Crores as grant from the Central and State Governments.

For the balance amount of Rupees Two Crores, we solely depend on the beneficence of all you devotees and admirers of Swami Vivekananda. Brothers and Sisters, we feel that a contribution from you towards this noble project will be an outstanding tribute to this great Saint-Patriot-Philosopher on his 150th Birth Anniversary. All donations are exempt from Income Tax, under section 80G of the IT Act, 1961.

**Swami Atmanishthananda  
(SaptarsiMj, Secretary)  
(0) 9414083312**

For direct transfer of contribution please inform your name & address by a letter/ e-mail / SMS

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A/c Type	Savings	Savings
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RTGS/NEFT Code	SBIN0013526	SBBJ0010132



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Address : Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Smriti Mandir  
P.O. Khetri, Dt. Jhunjhunu Rajasthan. Pin - 333503, Phone : 01593-234312  
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